



Kent Summers
09/06/2006 04:16 PM
PDT

To: YOSE Planning@NPS
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Concept Plan

RECEIVED
TWSR-026-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 1 of 1
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I'm sure you've gotten many comments concerning the Tuolumne Store, I'd like to add my perspective.

For years I worked for Yosemite Park and Curry Co., and watched the annual opening set up and closing tear down for the store and other tent frame "buildings" in Tuolumne. Very seldom did I notice any NPS official observers.

Almost (if not) every year the frames are scraped and repainted. This most often is done at any moment available, driven by opening schedules and dry weather opportunities. These operations often occur when the wind is blowing the paint chips and/or over spray off into the surrounding area. Because the painting occurs in the early spring, many times there will be surface water nearby that's running off to the river, ready to carry whatever particles along with it. The work crews are not diligent in preventing this contaminated run off, and contribute to it by being careless with litter and garbage.

To prevent this yearly recurring problem, a real building could be built, with an exterior facade (stone) that does not require painting. The building could be used for either storage or as a ski hut in winter, and would allow a more timely opening of services each spring to serve the visiting public, because the inside only set up should be less time consuming. Once built, the building would diminish environmental impact by eliminating yearly setup and tear down operations.

If the tent frame is historic, perhaps the building could be built encompassing the original tent frame.

Kent Summers
High Voltage Shop
[REDACTED]

RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----



Michele and Otis



09/06/2006 04:04 PM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: tuolumne planning

RECEIVED
TWSR-227-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 1 881
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Thank you for asking us to participate in the early stages of planning for the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows area. We are a family of four (2 adults, 2 teens) from Manhattan Beach in Southern California. We have been tent-camping in TM many times over the last several years. We usually spend two weeks in the main Tuolumne campground. We rely on the park shuttle for almost 100% of our transportation once we arrive in the park (from Highway 395). We usually spend our time taking day hikes into the backcountry. We also enjoy the interpretive programs & ranger-led activities.

We especially enjoy the quiet, uncrowded aspect of TM; especially compared to the Valley. We love TM the way it is & hope it will stay as wild as possible. We wouldn't want to see any more commercial activity. The "roads" inside the TM campground could use a little repair. Better signs and trail markers within the campground would keep people from trampling the whole area. Perhaps showers in the campground? Keep the campfire shows low-tech (no slide shows). Don't fire park rangers and replace them with low-paid private employees.

Michele G.
Manhattan Beach

1	9	2	C					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



Laurel Ames



09/06/2006 03:54 PM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED

TWSR-228-ELS

SEP 07 2006

P. 103

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Please acknowledge receipt of these comments.



T Meadows comments.doc

RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TWSR-228-215
P. 182

September 6, 2006

National Park Service by e-mail to yose_planning@nps.gov

RE: Tuolumne Planning

Dear Park Service,

As a hiker and backpacker who uses the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows areas, I am commenting on the Tuolumne River Plan and the Tuolumne Meadows Plan.

OVERUSE

Evidence of overuse is found throughout both areas, detracting substantially from the experience. On my last trip, I was appalled at the condition of the ground at Glen Aulin - it was all ground to fine dust and dust lay on everything. It was not a pleasant place to camp.

I remember that the California Wilderness Act designated both Glen Aulin and Vogelsang as wilderness, to capture their unique values for the generations to come. The Park Service would be well served in its work to provide the values of the Park Service's mission by removing the structures in both of those areas and restoring the areas to a natural setting. At this time, there is an overwhelming sense of overuse and certainly degradation of the natural values of the two areas.

Backcountry areas should never be exploited for commercial gain. To sacrifice the natural settings for commercial purposes does not fit well with the Park Service's goals. And, as demonstrated at these two sites, the commercial exploitation has resulted in substantial damage to the natural values of these two sites.

PACK ANIMALS

The Park Service should analyze very carefully the amount of damage caused by pack animals in the River Corridor and the Meadows. Trails are badly cut down, erosion is rampant and horse flies add to the general unpleasantness of the High Sierra Camps. In addition, dodging horse poop on hiking trails detracts from the hiking experience. The horse poop seems to end up in the rivers as thunderstorms and fall rains wash the fecal matter into streams and rivers. Hikers do not degrade the pack stock experience, thus the equation is badly weighted against hikers in attempting to achieve a pleasant experience in the park.

Reduction of group sizes, reduction of total animals, reduction of total trips per day are all methods that can be used to reduce damage and conflicts with experiences on trails. The Park Service should analyze the current damage and calculate what it will take to restore trails, grazing areas, corral areas, and reduce water quality and erosion impacts of stock animals.

TWSP-228-EIS
p. 283

Other methods that can improve the environment and the experience include trail management such as trails should be designated for hikers only, to reduce the conflicts between hikers and pack animals, from who steps off the trail(currently the hiker has to make way for the animal) to waste management, to erosion and vegetation damage.

And, shocking as it may be, the amount of overall use of trails in the Yosemite National Park has reached the point where the Park Service should require diapers on all pack animals.

I request that my comments be entered into the record of the planning for the Tuolumne River Corridor and the Tuolumne Meadows.

Laurel W. Ames

[REDACTED]

S. Lake Tahoe, CA 96158

[REDACTED]



"Tony Witt"

09/06/2006 03:41 PM
MST

To: <YOSE_Planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Scoping Comments on Tuolumne Meadows Plan

RECEIVED

TWSR-229-EIS
SEP 07 2006

P. 182
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Planning Team,

The following are comments intended to assist the scoping effort for the Tuolumne Meadows Plan.

We enjoy Tuolumne meadows and the adjacent area for:

- wonderful hiking (at this stage of our lives we particularly enjoy the hikes of 2-5 miles roundtrip that are appropriate for young kids)
- swimming in lakes and rivers
- campsites directly on the river
- going to campfire programs
- like all aspects of the way camping reservation system works at present

Good aspects of Toulumne:

- low key signage
- dispersed/low key facilities
- facilities are adequate
- no electricity in bathrooms
- low key camping facilities
- camp store food offerings are great - amazing careful product selection of organics and quality good.
- total number of campsites

Some suggestions and things to consider in plan:

- have a "no generator campground"
- have a walk-in campground to approximate the backpacking experience for those who cannot backpack
- make it easier to comply with bear rules

put bear box near table
bear box depth makes loading and unloading difficult/cumbersome (especially if you have food for a week)

the easier it is to access stuff the more likely we will keep our food locked up at all times

bear box lock - make it safer so it cannot smash fingers

- use Yoho Park in Canadian Rockies as a model. They have...

I	1	2	2	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

dishwashing areas outside bathrooms so that food particles go in to sewer not onto ground

provide firewood (for a fee) and do not allow wood gathering. Wood decomposition is essential for a healthy environment. It also looks more natural to have fallen wood around campground.

- mixed feelings on developing dispersed smaller campground vs. maintaining existing single large campground. The current campground is very tight. Spaces are very close together, environment is degraded. Do not want to see more campsites in the area however, we wonder if making several smaller campgrounds would lead to more natural experience for campers and less environmental damage.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the scoping process.

Sincerely,

Anthony and Barbara Witt

[REDACTED]

Claremont, California 91711

[REDACTED]



Cindy Wederich



09/06/2006 03:32 PM
MST

To: YOSE_Planning@nps.gov

cc:

Subject: Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management
Plan/Tuolumne Meadows Plan EIS

RECEIVED

TWSR-230-EIS

SEP 07 2006

P. 1 of 1
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Planning Committee,

Will the plan include an option to prevent increased commercialization of the park? Will the plan emphasize preservation and protection of the scenic beauty that will allow campers and backpackers to enjoy nature and feel like they have escaped the hustle and bustle that can exist in Yosemite Valley and outside the park? (There are fewer and fewer options for people who love to commune with nature and love to camp, but can not backpack into the wilderness to find the quite sounds of nature).

Will the plan consider setting aside a portion of the camping areas for tents only? (This would help decrease noise and light pollution for those who wish to escape it, but are not able to back pack.)

Will the plan include options to promote education about the area and encourage safe hiking and exploration? (I believe educating the public is key to help preseve and protect our natural resources and to prevent unnecessary distruction that is often caused by ignorance. Increasing the options to accomodate more rangers and volunteers to educate and lead hikes would be desireable.)

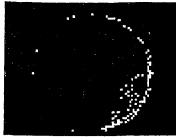
My hope is that the plan will encourage the area to be allowed to reamin "Wild" and that any new development should only be to support education and safety efforts in the area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Do you Yahoo!?

Everyone is raving about the all-new Yahoo! Mail.

I	1	2	3	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



"Anna Cummings"

09/06/2006 04:33 PM
AST

To: <Yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED
TwSR-231-815
SEP 07 2006
P. 1 03
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Anna Cummings

603 Center St. Apt C

Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

(540)552-2805

PUBLIC COMMENT

TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN

TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

My name is Anna Cummings and I am a student at Virginia Tech. I am a native Virginian, but I have worked in Yosemite National Park for the past three summers in the Interpretation department. The past two summers, I have been a part of the Mono Lake partnership. I am a part of the NPS Tuolumne Meadows Interpretation staff. In this position, I work four days at the Mono Lake Visitor Center and one day a week in Tuolumne Meadows. I also have housing down in Lee Vining. However, with the public scoping period for the Tuolumne River Plan and the Tuolumne Meadows Plan, I have thought a lot about employee housing in Tuolumne Meadows. I know what it is like to work as a Yosemite Park Ranger, but to live outside the park. I have been able to spend some time in employee housing in Tuolumne, as I have many friends who live there. I can tell you that living outside the park has definitely had an impact on my experience. I have also spoken with residents of Tuolumne Meadows housing and I feel like the issue of employee housing in Tuolumne is an area of concern. I feel that the tent cabin communities in Tuolumne Meadows need to be protected and preserved, because it is essential to the morale of employees and also essential to the services provided to visitors by resident rangers. Living in Tuolumne provides an experience unlike any other and allows the rangers living there to impart this connection to the visitor. Living in Tuolumne provides a connection to the place and this fosters a deeper love and concern among employees for Tuolumne Meadows. I also feel that employees should not have to commute to and from housing outside of Tuolumne Meadows or the park. I also believe that the tent cabins are the embodiment of the employee community and are suitable to the environment and atmosphere of Tuolumne Meadows.

RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

First and foremost, I think that it is very important for Tuolumne Meadows staff to live in Tuolumne Meadows. Employees, especially rangers, are seen as part of the environment. Rangers are a part of the park, not merely people who work there. Visitors are able to receive "real time" news about the environment from rangers. Employees are able to get to know Tuolumne Meadows much better than if they were living somewhere else. When you live in a place, that place gets under your skin and becomes a part of you as you grow accustomed to the moods and cycles of that environment. As the saying goes "home is where the heart is", and this certainly rings true for Tuolumne Meadows. Tuolumne Meadows is home to park employees and with "home" comes a sense of pride and respect not bred if they live in another area. This attachment breeds passion for the environment and protection of the area. Visitors appreciate this and this passion will translate into meaningful services to our visitors and may help them to care for, and consequently, about Tuolumne Meadows. Working here becomes only a 9-5 job if employees are forced to commute. Many rangers have commented that when most seasonal employees were moved out of Yosemite Valley and into El Portal, a connection to the environment was lost. Tuolumne Meadows has bred amazing passion among its rangers, and personally I think that this comes from living in Tuolumne Meadows.

I believe that the tent cabins in Tuolumne Meadows are vital to employee housing in Tuolumne Meadows. Tuolumne Meadows is a very special place, with a winter sometimes lasting eight months. I think that this is a part of what makes Tuolumne Meadows special to so many people, because the environment can recover from the heavy visitation experienced during the summer. Because winter lasts most of the year, spring, summer and fall are compressed into one "warm season". The environment is fragile and this is why temporary, non-winterized cabins are an essential part of this environment. Employees only live here 4 months out of the year, so more lavish accommodations are not needed. Employees who live in Tuolumne Meadows work here because it is rustic and surrounded by wilderness. Most people don't want or need permanent structures with many amenities. Living in a cabin with a canvas roof, pellet stoves and bear lockers fits with the environment and allows rangers the opportunity to "camp out" like many visitors do. This is part of what Tuolumne Meadows is all about-fitting in with the environment. Visitors often want to hear how the rangers live, and having a ranger tell them they live in a tent/tent cabin inspires visitors and creates a sense of wonder. Visitors (and employees) come to National Parks because they are not cities or suburbs with condos/dorms/apartments. Employees who desire more amenities have places like that where they can work, and we should have a place, like Tuolumne Meadows, where rangers can go to experience rustic living in a beautiful, similar environment. The tent cabin "camps" (Ranger Camp, Bug Camp, and Road Camp) foster a sense of community and shared experiences, while also giving employees room to breathe. You are more a part of the environment, not crammed on top of each other in a dormitory. The legacy of living in a tent cabin is something that employees and rangers value. It is amazing to be able to visit in years to come and see the tent cabins and know that one lived there and was a part of Tuolumne history. The memories that people take away from this place often come from their place in the tent cabin community-walking to a friend's cabin, sitting by the pellet stove when it's cold outside, hearing rain on the canvas roof. These are memories that I will always keep with

me. Many people I have spoken to say that they come here because they get a chance to live in Tuolumne in tent cabins and that they would leave and go to other parks if they were made to live in dormitory style buildings or out of the park. This is a shame because if this were to happen, Tuolumne Meadows would lose a lot of passionate employees and the livelihood of Tuolumne would never be the same.

I believe that living in Tuolumne Meadows and in tent cabins is important for employees of Tuolumne Meadows, and that living outside the park or in dorms would be a bad idea. If employees were moved out of the park, or even outside of Tuolumne Meadows, for housing, employees would lose their connection to Tuolumne Meadows. It would be less environmentally friendly, as people would have to commute. This would also increase traffic at the already busy Tioga Pass entrance station. Construction of new housing would be an added expense versus the current housing in Tuolumne housing. Also it would be difficult to build in the towns in the Eastern Sierra because of land ownership and high cost of land and construction. I also believe that living in dormitory style housing or permanent housing is detrimental to the essence of Tuolumne Meadows and its employees. In dorms or hard sided cabins, you are isolated from the outside world of Tuolumne Meadows. You again lose your connection with Tuolumne Meadows and the surrounding wilderness. Construction of dormitories or housing in other regions of the park would leave a bigger footprint on the environment. One of the great things about the dispersed layout of buildings in Tuolumne is that you can stand on a dome or mountain peak and not see huge complexes of buildings. Dormitory style housing would impede scenic views and would affect vegetation and watershed much more than current situation. A dormitory for housing would be very expensive and I feel that such an expense is not necessary for such a short season.

In conclusion, I am satisfied with the current Tuolumne Meadows housing situation, and I feel that other employees are as well. There are hard sided cabins in existence in Tuolumne, and I feel that those serve their own purpose as well, for permanent employees or law enforcement officers that need to escape from their day-to-day duties and relax, but I feel that it is unnecessary to change the housing at all, because many people are very happy with the tent cabin communities and the values and memories that come along with them. I feel that it is important to keep in mind that employees are only in Tuolumne Meadows for a few months, so the expense of more amenities is unneeded. Tuolumne Meadows is a rich, amazing environment, and the sense of community in the warm season is also rich and amazing because of the location and assemblage of tent cabin communities. I feel that this definitely needs to be protected.

Sincerely,
Anna Cummings



"Jason Keith"

09/06/2006 01:49 PM
CST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>

cc:

Subject: Access Fund Scoping Comments to Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River
Comprehensive Management Plan/Tuolumne Meadows Plan and EIS

VIA EMAIL

-hard copy to follow

September 6, 2006

Superintendent Michael Tollefson
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Tuolumne Planning
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389
Email: yose_planning@nps.gov

RECEIVED
TWSR-232-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P.1 8 12
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

**Re: Access Fund Scoping Comments to Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River
Comprehensive Management Plan/Tuolumne Meadows Plan and EIS**

Yosemite Planning Team:

The Access Fund welcomes the opportunity to submit these scoping comments to the National Park Service's (NPS) Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan/Tuolumne Meadows Plan and EIS ("Tuolumne River and Meadows Plan"). With input from several past and present Tuolumne climbers, we provide these comments to better inform Yosemite National Park (YNP) planners and help identify the appropriate scope for the Tuolumne River and Meadows Plan that will help to both protect this unique environment and provide opportunities for enjoyment.

The Access Fund

The Access Fund is the only national advocacy organization whose mission keeps climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. A 501(c)3 non-profit supporting and representing over 1.6 million climbers nationwide in all forms of climbing—rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, and bouldering—the Access Fund is the largest US climbing organization with over 15,000 members and affiliates.

The Access Fund promotes the responsible use and sound management of climbing resources by working in cooperation with climbers, other recreational users, public land managers and private land owners. We encourage an ethic of personal responsibility, self-regulation, strong conservation values and minimum impact practices among climbers.

The Access Fund has a long history of participation in Yosemite National Park management initiatives. For example, the Access Fund submitted extensive comments on the Valley Plan in 2000, the 2001 Yosemite Falls Plan, the Yosemite Lodge Redevelopment Plan and Valley

#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS	

Implementation Plan in 2003, and the 2005 Merced River Plan. The Access Fund also testified at a 2003 congressional field hearing in YNP regarding the Parkwide Out Of Valley Campgrounds Study, and provided lengthy informal input regarding a climbing management plan for Yosemite Valley and a redesign project for Camp 4 (which was partially addressed in the Lodge Redevelopment Plan). In the 1990s the Access Fund built a climbers' trail to Sunnyside Jamb Crack in the Valley, and last year we provided grant funding for bear boxes placed at strategic locations in Yosemite Valley to serve the needs of wall climbers who lack food storage in the Valley while they are on overnight climbs. The Access Fund continues to communicate with the NPS planners at YNP regarding future planning initiatives and implementation plans, such as those scheduled that will affect El Capitan Meadow, Camp 4, general climbing policies and camping issues parkwide. Finally, the Access Fund is proud to again support the Yosemite Climbing Association's "Yosemite Facelift" scheduled for the end of September.

The Access Fund supports all types of climbing, from urban sport climbing to pristine alpine wilderness mountaineering, including climbing experiences in protected environments such as mandated by the Wild and Scenic River Act (WSRA) and the Wilderness Act. We also believe that these special environments are entirely appropriate for compatible recreational uses. Indeed, NPS policies support activities (like climbing, picnicking and camping) that promote a "direct association with park resources." [1] Accordingly, the Access Fund supports the protections required by the WSRA and Wilderness Act as well as NPS planning and management decisions that provide and enhance climbing and camping opportunities. We also endorse NPS decisions to continue the modest level of services and facilities currently provided at Tuolumne Meadows and environs.

Climbing History at Tuolumne

Tuolumne Meadows offers some of the finest alpine rock climbing and scenery found anywhere in the world. Boasting both short "cragging" routes and multi-pitch alpine summits (both Tuolumne styles of which are considered classics by climbers world-wide) the Tuolumne area has attracted climbers since at least the 1940s when the Mathes Crest and Southeast Buttress of Cathedral Peak were first scaled. New climbing route activity continued through the late 1950 and 1960s when signature Tuolumne climbs such as the Crescent Arch on Daff Dome, the West Ridge of Mount Conness, and the Regular Route on Fairview Dome were first made. Into the 1970s climbing test pieces were established on Medlicott Dome (Bachar-Yerian) as well as modern Tuolumne favorites such as the Third Pillar of Mount Dana.

Climbing guidebook writer Greg Barnes notes that the Meadows provides a very different experience from what climbers find in Yosemite Valley. "Instead of smooth, polished cracks and blank faces, Tuolumne has sharp, angular cracks, endless fields of knobs, and golden glacier polish with incut edges." [2] Tuolumne is cool when the summer heat cooks lower elevations, and the Meadows has little traffic compared to the near urban atmosphere of Yosemite Valley. Thus, in addition to the area's unique geologic attributes that make it ideal for rock climbing and wilderness camping, Tuolumne also fits a seasonal niche: every summer overheated climbers and campers travel to Tuolumne from afar seeking the cool temperatures found in the Tuolumne high country.

Tuolumne Planning

In 1984, Congress designated approximately 83 miles of the Tuolumne River as a Wild and Scenic River, including 54 miles within Yosemite National Park.^[3] As directed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act,^[4] the NPS must prepare a comprehensive management plan for the Tuolumne River within Yosemite National Park to guide future decisions within the river management corridor (approximately ¼ on each side). The Tuolumne River and Meadows Plan “will evaluate a range of alternatives that present management direction for protecting the free-flowing condition and unique values of the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park.”^[5]

The two management plans that the NPS intends for the Tuolumne area will consolidate a comprehensive management plan for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River (“Tuolumne River Plan”)^[6] with an implementation plan for Tuolumne Meadows (“Tuolumne Meadows Plan”).^[7] Congress directed the NPS to complete the River Plan simultaneous to the development of the Meadows Plan which will implement the action items of the River Plan as well as address additional facilities and infrastructure issues that need immediate attention.

Accordingly, these scoping comments address both how the climbing community might be affected by NPS planning required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as well as specifics related to any changes to facilities and services at Tuolumne Meadows. These comments should help define the NPS’s management direction for both Tuolumne plans. The Access Fund hopes these and other public comments will help identify the appropriate range of issues that should be addressed in this planning effort that will help ensure that future NPS actions are consistent with the National Park Service Organic Act, various Yosemite management plans, and other relevant laws and policies.

Access Fund Scoping Comments

The Access Fund’s primary concerns regarding the scope of planning for the Tuolumne River and Meadows Plans are as follows

- **Retain and increase camping opportunities**, especially walk-in sites, both at the existing Tuolumne Meadows Campground and other campgrounds along Highway 120. At the very least there should be no net loss of campsites in the Tuolumne area.
- **Maintain the level of services and facilities at Tuolumne Meadows**, no more and no less, except for the addition of more campsites.
- **Preserve and enhance appropriate parking areas** in the Tuolumne Meadows area along Highway 120 that provide access to recreational opportunities such as climbing, hiking, and fishing.
- **Ensure that customary and compatible recreational uses** within the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River management corridor, such as **climbing, picnicking and camping**, are maintained. In particular, the Access Fund is concerned that the NPS will remove “Loop

A" from the Tuolumne Meadows Campground and will restrict use of the Lembert Dome picnicking and parking area.

- **Reduce noise from motorcycles and RV generators.** These noises significantly degrade the experience of other YNP visitors. The Plan presents an excellent opportunity for the NPS to analyze the **soundscape** for both the Tuolumne River management corridor and Highway 120.
- **Recognize climbing and camping as Outstanding Recreational Values (ORVs) of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River management corridor.** The unique qualities of the Tuolumne climbing and camping experience are consistent with the NPS's definition for recreational ORVs and thus should be designated as such.

The NPS Should Retain and Increase Camping Opportunities in and Near Tuolumne Meadows

The Access Fund is concerned that this planning initiative will negatively affect camping opportunities in the Tuolumne area. For example, we understand that there has been some discussion about removing "Loop A" in the Tuolumne Meadows Campground because it is near the Tuolumne River. This camping loss would only add to the existing camping shortage at Tuolumne, and would neglect the specific goals of YNP planners. Indeed, the 1980 Yosemite Park General Management Plan (GMP) calls for *increasing* the number of campsites in the park and for building new walk-in campsites at Tuolumne.[8] Moreover, as the Access Fund testified at the congressional field hearing on the 2002 Yosemite Parkwide Campground Planning Study (the "Campground Study"), Yosemite has a parkwide shortfall of 1,000 campsites from the number projected for the park in the 1980 Yosemite GMP, with a shortfall of over 100 campsites in the Tuolumne area. Currently, the demand for campsites greatly exceeds supply in both Tuolumne and YNP as a whole despite clear NPS planning goals to increase camping in the park. Accordingly, in the Plan, the NPS should implement the findings in the 2002 Campground Study in regard to the Highway 120 corridor, which would at least add another 16 infill campsites in existing campgrounds.[9] We also oppose any reduction in the number of existing campsites. Thus, if Loop A of the Tuolumne Meadows Campground is slated for removal, the NPS must relocate those campsites inland or reconfigure the existing loop for walk-in sites, but in no case should the NPS reduce the number of campsites.

Providing camping opportunities furthers important NPS management policies[10]

In our comments to the Valley Plan and the 2002 Campground Study, we pointed out the many ways that camping enhances the visitor experience and promotes the enjoyment of Yosemite National Park:

First, camping is a form of *recreation*, in which the camper has to provide their own shelter, food, warmth and protection from wildlife, insects, and the elements. Staying in developed accommodations, by contrast, where these services are provided to the visitor, is a form of *leisure* that separates the visitor from park resources. Camping brings the visitor into a direct

relationship with park resources and distances the visitor from the commercial values of comfort and convenience and the expression of social status. Thus, camping brings the visitor closer to the very natural attributes for which national parks are set aside and protected.

Also, camping is democratic. In campgrounds social distinctions account for little, and camping has the potential to bring people together in shared appreciation of their natural surroundings in a manner that reduces social barriers. The nation's great parks such as Yosemite present an opportunity to be a force for social equality. Unfortunately, the lodging picture in YNP preserves the social distinctions of the greater society, rather than leveling them. This is true particularly in Yosemite Valley where luxury accommodations abound at the expense of camping opportunities.

Finally, camping is inherently communal. Campers live in the open in close proximity to others and must adapt their behavior to accommodate others' needs. Campers thus have an enhanced opportunity to associate with other people and develop new relationships in the context of a natural park setting. Camping also fosters the development of relationships within existing groups by bringing people together in simple and informal surroundings. This aspect of camping is recognized in the 2002 Campground Study, which calls for more group sites and more closely-related "buddy" campsites.

Hierarchy of overnight opportunities for park visitors

The NPS management policies' emphasis on visitor experiences that foster a "direct relation to park resources" immediately suggests a natural hierarchy of overnight opportunities for park visitors. Visitors' overnight experiences that foster the most direct relationship with park resources should be accorded the highest priority in park planning, while those that foster the least direct relationship with park resources should be accorded the lowest priority. Thus, in considering visitors' overnight experiences for the Tuolumne Plan the NPS should prioritize backcountry camping first, followed in order by walk-to and walk-in campsites,[11] drive-in campsites, RV camping, and finally rustic lodging like Tuolumne Lodge.[12] In the Tuolumne Plan this can be achieved by expanding the number of walk-in sites at the Tuolumne Campground while reducing the number of RV sites.[13] Using this prioritization hierarchy could allow YNP to reduce impacts to the river corridor at Loop A while maintaining the same number of campsites in the Tuolumne Meadows Campground.

The Access Fund supports less developed campgrounds that serve climbers and other backcountry visitors to Yosemite's high country. As we have pointed out in the past, climbers and backpackers are able to use smaller, less-developed walk-in campgrounds without paved roads and running water. There exist a number of locations in YNP where such campgrounds could be developed, including along Highway 120 in the Tuolumne Meadows high country and along the old Tioga Road alignment leading to May Lake.

Because of the Tuolumne campsite shortfall and the demand for camping at Tuolumne, the Access Fund supports the implementation of all the areas studied in the 2002 Campground Study. The NPS should also coordinate campground planning with national forests outside the park. In recent years, the Inyo National Forest closed all the informal camping areas along

TWSR-232-215
P. 6 of 18

Highway 120 east of the park and along the road to Saddlebag Lake, eliminating about 100 informal overnight parking and camping areas. These actions have increased public demand for camping opportunities inside YNP and this shortage needs to be taken into account in the River Plan and any other YNP planning for new campgrounds.

Services and Facilities at Tuolumne Should Be Maintained at Current Levels

The current level of facilities at Tuolumne are modest and consistent with NPS goals of providing experiences that facilitate the use and enjoyment of parks which are "harmonious with park resources, [and] compatible with natural processes."^[14] We believe the existing services are currently at an appropriate level for the rustic back country atmosphere at Tuolumne Meadows and should not be altered in any significant manner. We support maintaining these services just as they are, or with minimal improvements and better maintenance to reduce resource impacts and improve the visitor experience.^[15]

NPS policies state that overnight facilities and food services will be restricted to the kinds and levels necessary and appropriate to achieve each park's purposes. Overnight accommodations and food services will be provided "when the private sector or other public agencies cannot adequately provide them in the park vicinity."^[16] In-park facilities or services such as those found at Tuolumne are justified when the "distance and travel time to accommodations and services outside the park are too great to permit reasonable use, or when leaving the park to obtain incidental services would substantially detract from the quality of the visitor experience."^[17] The nearest facilities and services to the Tuolumne area are found at Lee Vining 20 miles and 30 minutes away, however traveling to Lee Vining not only consumes fuel but also pollutes the park environment and adds to the traffic congestion on YNP roads thus distracting from the visitor experience.^[18] Many YNP visitors value the opportunity to buy gas and basic groceries at Tuolumne Meadows, and this convenience for incidental services maintains the quality of the visitor experience by preventing the need to drive to Lee Vining or Crane Flat. Accordingly, the current Tuolumne Meadows facilities are appropriately modest yet serve important visitor needs and should be retained at present levels.

Existing Parking Locations Should be Retained Throughout the Tuolumne Area

The Access Fund is concerned that the NPS may remove parking locations along the Highway 120 corridor as part of the River Plan. We support the retention of existing climber access parking locations at, for example, Fairview and Cottage Domes. NPS policy supports the use of necessary and small parking areas to accommodate park visitors where they don't "unacceptably intrude . . . on park resources or values."^[19] When parking areas are deemed necessary, they will be "limited to the smallest size appropriate, and be designed to harmoniously accommodate motor vehicles and other appropriate users."^[20]

The existing pullouts along Highway 120 are necessary because they serve the needs of visitors who access the numerous hiking, climbing, fishing and mountaineering objectives found in the Tuolumne region. Many of these areas are not served by a formal NPS trailhead or parking areas and require various specific parking locations along Highway 120 between Tioga Pass and Crane Flat. This is true particularly in the Tuolumne Meadows region where most of the rock climbing

is found. Removing these pullouts would cause access problems for these user groups and potentially cause resource damage from Tuolumne visitors forced to pull on to the shoulder of Highway 120. Instead, the NPS should survey existing parking locations and formally acknowledge key parking sites along Highway 120 to facilitate visitor access and address any maintenance needs. If necessary, the NPS should take measures to mitigate parking impacts while preserving the essential access these parking areas provide.

The NPS Should Maintain Customary and Compatible Recreational Uses of the Tuolumne River Area

The Access Fund is concerned that the Tuolumne River Plan might alter longstanding resource-compatible visitor use patterns at Tuolumne and, for example, remove or reduce in size the Lembert Dome parking and picnic area. Congress passed the WSR to protect not only free-flowing rivers but also their immediate environments which “possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, *recreational*, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values.” Congress also acknowledged that these river segments are to be “protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”^[21] Accordingly, under the WSR all existing uses along the Tuolumne River management corridor including picnicking may continue where they do not conflict with river protection.^[22] Moreover, the 1980 Yosemite GMP states that a variety of uses must be retained to preserve the vitality of the park, and those activities such as climbing, camping and picnicking “which take advantage of the park’s natural features rather than man-made facilities or mechanized equipment, are the most appropriate uses of the park.”^[23] The climbing and picnicking at Lembert Dome is one such place.

The Lembert Dome has been popular with climbers for decades, not only as a morning breakfast location and staging area for climbs on the dome, but as a place to cook dinner outside the confines of the campground. Here, picnickers can walk up the base of the dome and sit while eating their dinner and enjoy the changing colors of the sunset and the spectacular views out over Tuolumne Meadows towards the Cathedral Range. NPS management policies state that “picnic areas and other day use areas to be used for specific purposes may be provided on a limited basis as appropriate to meet existing visitor needs.”^[24] The Lembert Dome area has been serving the needs of climbers, picnickers and other recreational users for decades and should be preserved and possibly expanded under the Tuolumne Plan.

Besides the Lembert Dome picnic area, other customary and compatible recreational activities at Tuolumne could be affected by the River Plan. The WSR provides that, unless otherwise designated by the managing agency, the boundaries of a river “shall generally comprise that area measured within one-quarter mile from the ordinary high water mark on each side of the river.”^[25] At Tuolumne this management corridor may include:

- Picnicking and parking at the Lembert Dome picnic area
- Climbing on Lembert Dome, with many classic routes at all levels of difficulty
- Climbing on Puppy Dome including several excellent beginner top-roping routes used by the Yosemite Mountaineering School, boy scouts, other groups, and families
- Climbing on Canopy World and other riverside domes which offer a variety of routes

within easy reach of the river

- Climbing on the Cottage Domes which host many classic hard Tuolumne face routes
- Wilderness climbing and camping in the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne around and below Glen Aulin
- Camping in the Tuolumne Meadows Campground
- Use of the services and facilities found at Tuolumne Meadows

Wilderness climbing and camping are recreational values promoted and protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Tuolumne River Plan should take notice. As noted, Congress passed the WSRA to protect “free-flowing” rivers—and their immediate environments—which “possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, *recreational*, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values.”[26] Congress also acknowledged that these river segments are to be “protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”[27] Visitors have been using various Tuolumne climbing, picnicking and camping areas for decades, and each of these activities fit the NPS definition for a recreation ORV: “untrammelled character . . . [that] provides outstanding opportunities for a diversity of experiences characterized by primitive, unconfined recreation in a landscape dominated by natural scenery and soundscapes.” The Tuolumne environment is ideal for primitive unconfined climbing and backcountry camping in a matchless natural scene. As such, climbing and camping in the Tuolumne River management corridor is consistent with the WSRA and NPS policies and thus there should be no change to these longstanding recreational uses by the Tuolumne River Plan.

The NPS Should Assess Soundscape Impacts Caused by Motorcycles and RV Generators

Loud noise from motorcycles and electric generators greatly diminishes the ability of climbers, campers and other visitors to enjoy the natural soundscape of YNP, particularly in the Tuolumne Meadows high country where such urban intrusions are especially inappropriate. Motorcycles roar up from Yosemite Valley and over Tioga Pass daily and fill the road corridor with a tremendous ear-shattering thunder that can be heard for miles into the wilderness. This noise exceeds not only NPS soundscape management standards but the requirements of the California Vehicle Code,[28] the Wilderness Act and the WSRA. To our knowledge, the park has made absolutely no effort to enforce the noise standards of any of these authorities; the Plan, however, may provide such an opportunity.

Likewise, RV generators in the Tuolumne Meadows (and other campgrounds) regularly violate NPS and WSRA soundscape standards. Under YNP’s camping regulations, RVs are allowed to run their generators from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. This overly-generous period makes it impossible for tent campers to sleep late in the mornings or enjoy preparing and eating their dinners without disturbance. The Tuolumne Plan presents an excellent opportunity for the NPS to correct this long-standing deficiency in its campground management.

NPS policy strives to “preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the natural soundscapes of parks . . . [which] exist in the absence of human-caused sound.”[29] NPS policy also endeavors to “restore degraded soundscapes to the natural condition wherever possible, and will protect natural soundscapes from degradation due to noise (undesirable human-caused sound).”[30] Consistent with this direction, the 2006 *Draft ORV Report* seeks to protect the outstandingly

remarkable values identified in the Tuolumne River management corridor, most of which is in designated Wilderness, that provides “outstanding opportunities for a diversity of experiences characterized by primitive, unconfined recreation in a landscape dominated by natural scenery and *soundscapes* .”[31]

Accordingly, in the plan the NPS should analyze and propose mitigation measures for loud motorcycle noise along Highway 120, RV generator noise in campgrounds and other noise sources that violate California law, NPS policies, and the mandates of the WSRA and the Wilderness Act. NPS planners should identify what levels of human-caused sound can be accepted within the Tuolumne management area and propose specific actions to reduce noise levels.[32] At a minimum, soundscape protection measures must include reducing motorcycle and RV generator noise to levels acceptable to other park visitors.

Climbing and Camping Should be Explicitly Recognized as Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Tuolumne River Corridor

The unique qualities of Tuolumne climbing and camping are a recreational values promoted and protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Congress passed the WSRA to protect free-flowing rivers and their immediate environments which “possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, *recreational* , geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values.” Outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) are defined by the WSRA as the unique characteristics that make a river worthy of special protection. The 2006 *Draft ORV Report* [33] for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River presents proposed ORVs for the portion of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River located within Yosemite National Park, however climbing and camping both failed to make the list.

The 1979 *Wild and Scenic River Tuolumne Final Study and Report* found that each river segment had ORVs in the following categories: scenic, *recreational* , geologic, wildlife, historic/cultural, and scientific/educational. The ORVs articulated in Table 2 of the 2006 *Draft ORV Report* provide broad indicators of acceptable and intended recreational uses occurring within the various segments of the Tuolumne River. The Tuolumne River outstandingly remarkable values acknowledged in the *Draft ORV Report* include its “untrammeled character . . . [that] provides outstanding opportunities for a diversity of experiences characterized by primitive, unconfined recreation in a landscape dominated by natural scenery and soundscapes.”[34] The climbing opportunities found at Tuolumne Meadows are rare in quality with regards to high quality alpine granite rock climbing in an untrammeled wilderness setting. Tuolumne’s unique attributes attract visitors from around the world as can be attested to by a brief visit to the Tuolumne Meadows Campground. Similarly, the unique wilderness camping found in the Tuolumne Meadows area is rare and popular to international visitors. As such, recreational climbing and camping at Tuolumne are both activities consistent with the standard set out in the NPS’s 2006 *Draft ORV Report* , and the NPS should elevate its protection of these recreational ORVs when it identifies the proper scope for the Tuolumne River Plan.

Conclusion

TWSR- 232- EIS
P. 10 of 12

The Access Fund welcomes this opportunity to comment on the scoping phase of the Tuolumne River and Meadows Plans. We hope that these scoping comments assist the NPS in identifying the proper planning scope for the Tuolumne River management corridor and produce a better plan. In short, we support increasing the number of campsites in the greater Tuolumne area especially at the Tuolumne Meadows Campground. The NPS should also maintain customary and resource-compatible recreational uses in the area and continue the services and facilities at Tuolumne at existing levels with regards to the stores, gas station and grill. If you have any questions or comment please contact me at 435-21519-0693 or Jason@accessfund.org.

Best Regards,

Jason Keith
Access Fund Policy Director

Cc: Steve Matous, Access Fund Executive Director
Armando Menocal, Access Fund Yosemite Task Force
Paul Minault, Access Fund Yosemite Task Force
Phil Powers, American Alpine Club Executive Director
Linda McMillan, American Alpine Club
Mark Fincher, Yosemite National Park Climbing Program Manager
Jesse McGahey, Yosemite National Park Climbing Ranger
Chris McNamara, Supertopo
US Congressman George Radanovich

[1] National Park Service Management Policies, 8.2 Visitor Use (2001). Moreover, the YNP General Management Plan (GMP) seeks to "promote visitors' understanding and appreciation" of Tuolumne Meadows, and this may best be accomplished through YNP management policies that support climbing and camping experiences.

[2] Greg Barnes, *Tuolumne Free Climbs* 13 (2003).

[3] The same year The California Wilderness Act of 1984 also provided direction parkwide in Yosemite for wilderness protection.

[4] The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 was amended by the California Wilderness Act of 1984 to add the Tuolumne River to the national system of protected rivers.

[5] 71 Fed. Reg. 38899 (July 110, 2006). In the National Park Service, a river management plan authorized by the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is on the same level as a general management plan. Thus, the Tuolumne River Plan will work side-by-side as a companion document to Yosemite National Park's 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) and amend provisions of that GMP which relate to land use planning and user capacity in the Tuolumne River corridor. Both the GMP and the Tuolumne River Plan will guide future decisions and implementation plans, such as the Tuolumne Meadows Plan.

[6] *Id.* The Tuolumne River Plan will provide broad management guidance and establish the overall goals and vision for the river corridor. Its policy directives will guide future management and amend the Yosemite National Park General Management Plan for the Tuolumne River area.

[7] *Id.* The Tuolumne Meadows Plan is an implementation-level plan that will carry out the goals of the River Plan, focus on the types and levels of visitor services and activities offered in the vicinity of Tuolumne Meadows, and delineate which areas may be targeted for restoration.

[8] Yosemite National Park, General Management Plan, 17 (1980). The GMP calls not just for 50 more walk-in campsites at Tuolumne Meadows, but also for retaining 50 campsites at Tenaya Lake, expanding the Porcupine Flat campground from 50 to 75 sites, the Yosemite Creek campground from 30 to 75 sites, and the White Wolf

campground from 86 to 150 sites. The Crane Flat campground also was to be increased from 164 to 200 sites.

[9] *Campground Study* at C-3 - C-4.

[10] NPS management policy is to "encourage visitor activities that . . . foster an understanding of, and appreciation for, park resources and values, or will promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources." NPS Management Policies, 8.2 Visitor Use (2001).

[11] In the *Campground Study*, a walk-in campsite is defined as one within 50 feet of parking, while a walk-to site is more than 50 feet from parking. *Campground Study* at B-11.

[12] The 2006 *Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values* (ORVs) for the Tuolumne River Plan embraces the "rustic lodging" experience at Tuolumne Lodge while saying nothing about the importance of camping as an ORV in direct contravention of the Management Policies. *Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Outstandingly Remarkable Values Draft Report*, 12 (2006).

[13] At present, the Tuolumne Meadows campground has 332 sites. *Campground Study* at A-17. Of these, 161 or almost a half are RV sites, while only 25 are walk-ins (for backpackers). Note: this calculation is based on the campground map handout provided by the Tuolumne Meadows campground office.

[14] NPS Management Policies, Chapter 9: Park Facilities (2001).

[15] Currently at Tuolumne Meadows visitors find the following services and facilities Tuolumne Meadows Grill, Tuolumne Meadows Store & Gas Station, Yosemite Mountaineering School and Outdoor Shop, Tuolumne Meadows Stable, and Tuolumne Meadows Campground (approx. 332 walk-in, drive-in auto and RV sites).

[16] NPS Management Policies, 9.3.2 Overnight Accommodations and Food Services (2001).

[17] *Id.*

[18] NPS Management Policies, Chapter 9: Park Facilities (2001).

[19] NPS Management Policies, 9.2.5 Parking Areas (2001).

[20] *Id.*

[21] WSRA, §4(d), 16 USC 1275(d).

[22] To achieve a "nondegradation standard" for the Tuolumne River, the NPS must establish a management plan that documents baseline resource conditions, specifies potential adverse impacts, and plans for strategies that will resolve such adverse impacts and "enhance" the Wild and Scenic values (Outstandingly Remarkable Values) as established in the WSRA. Climbing and picnicking along the Tuolumne River, at Lembert Dome for example, should be seen as activities that enhance the management area's ORVs.

[23] Yosemite National Park, General Management Plan, 15 (1980).

[24] NPS Management Policy - 9.3.4.1 Picnic and Other Day Use Areas (2001).

[25] WSRA, §4(d), 16 USC 1275(d).

[26] *Id.*

[27] *Id.*

[28] California V.C. § 27202. Motorcycle Limits.

[29] NPS Management Policies, 4.9 Soundscape Management (2001).

[30] *Id.*

[31] *Draft ORV Report*, 12 (2006).

[32] The NPS should restore the natural quiet and natural sounds associated with the physical and biological resources especially along Highway 120 and in the Tuolumne Campground. To do this, park planners should carefully evaluate and manage how, when, and where motorized equipment is used by all those who operate equipment in the parks. The natural ambient sound level—that is, the environment of sound that exists in the absence of human-caused noise—should be the baseline condition, and the standard against which current conditions in a soundscape will be measured and evaluated. NPS Management Policies, 8.2.3 Use of Motorized Equipment (2001).

[33] *Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Outstandingly Remarkable Values Draft Report* (2006).

[34] *Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Outstandingly Remarkable Values Draft Report*, 12 (2006). "Recreational" ORVs are specifically defined as "opportunities [that] are, or have the potential to be, rare or popular enough to attract visitors from around the world." *Id.*

TWSR-232-EIS
p. 12 of 12

Policy Director | The Access Fund



CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This electronic mail transmission is confidential, may be privileged and should be read or retained only by the intended recipient. If you have received this transmission in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete it from your system.



CHRIS MODIN

09/06/2006 12:38 PM
MST

To: yosemite <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne River Scooping

RECEIVED
TWSR - 233-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 103
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Michael Tollefson
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, Ca 95389

September 4, 2006

Dear Mr. Tollefson:

I want to thank you and your staff for conducting the recent public scooping sessions requesting public comment in planning for the future of the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows area. Your staff is doing an exemplary job and should be commended for their knowledge of the issues and ability to interact with the public in a pleasant and enjoyable way.

Efforts to modify current conditions and activities in the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows area through this planning process must emphasize maintaining the highest level of resource protection possible while allowing a reasonable level of access for the public enjoyment of this great natural resource. Future actions may require removing or modifying existing structures and reducing current human use in the Tuolumne Meadows area.

Casual observations of the Tuolumne Meadows area indicate current human activities exceed capacity. Observe streamside erosion, social trails impacting meadows, highly negative visual impacts of roadside parking, impacted campgrounds and excessive numbers of people in every visual field during heavy use periods are some examples that the existing use levels are too high.

There are a number of areas that need attention. Hopefully through this planning process both resource protections and visitor experience can be improved. Following are some of our thoughts that we believe will improve much needed resource protections and afford a much higher level of visitor experience that currently exists.

Limiting the number of vehicles in the Tuolumne Meadows area will help establish and guide visitor capacity levels. The highly negative impacts of roadside parking along Highway 120 and other secondary roads must be eliminated throughout the Tuolumne Meadows area. Parking should be sequestered in forest cover where possible between the highway and the wilderness boundary to the south. New off-road

5	1	22	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR TS

parking should be designed to remove as few trees as possible to maintain cover and avoid creating new large open "parking lots" that maximize parking spaces but does nothing to resolve the issue of excessive numbers of vehicles visually impacting the outstanding scenic qualities of the Tuolumne Meadows area. The visual impacts of hundreds of vehicles on Tuolumne Meadows outstanding scenic quality is what we are trying to correct. Establish shuttle service from Yosemite Valley and other points for visitors that will minimize the need for transient use parking. Backpackers on extended trips should be encouraged or required to use shuttles, and trailhead parking could be limited to 2-3 days to encourage shuttle use. New parking in open areas should not be developed.

Consider signage at Park entrance points advising visitors (transient parking at Tuolumne Meadows full-through traffic only) will help avoid impacts and congestion that currently exists with uncontrolled parking.

Upgrade the existing outdated wastewater treatment facility to tertiary standards and if at all possible remove current wastewater treatment components out of the present meadow area location. Suitable architectural structures compatible with the surroundings should be an important element in the wastewater treatment upgrade.

Prohibit social trail use and establish designated routes for meadow access and crossings. These requirements should minimize impacts to meadows in heavy use areas. Trailside interpretive sites should be made as unobtrusive as possible and placed where they do not impact the view shed and should be constructed with natural materials (rocks, timbers etc.).

Consolidate the two existing stock facilities to a single site and consider the need to reduce overall stock use. Weed free feed must be required for all stock use.

The seasonal, overnight canvass tent facilities at Tuolumne Meadows Lodge should remain temporary. Constructing hard sided permanent overnight structures at Tuolumne Meadows Lodge as some suggest would encourage year round use requiring a greatly expanded permanent support infrastructure that is not in keeping with the historical seasonal use of the Tuolumne Meadows area. Maintaining the temporary nature of Tuolumne Meadows Lodge will obviate future efforts to open the area to extended seasons and year round use that would be an environmental disaster for the area. To many the temporary white canvass tent structures are visually very unattractive. A color other than white might significantly mitigate the visual impact of these seasonal structures to the outstanding scenic qualities of the Tuolumne Meadows area. Other mitigating ideas are welcome.

Tuolumne Meadows campgrounds are congested and impacted with overuse. The camping experience could be improved if campground density were reduced by expanding existing sites toward the wilderness boundaries to the south. Further improvements would include upgrading existing "mission 66" style restrooms to aesthetically acceptable architectural standards.

The store and grill should be razed and reconstructed maintaining the present size and capacity of the existing facility. We have an opportunity here to upgrade these structures and make them architecturally compatible with the Tuolumne Meadows surroundings. These facilities are heavily used and could easily be upgraded without encouraging public pressure for extended seasons and year round use that would result if permanent overnight structures were constructed.

Eliminating the gas station at Tuolumne Meadows will reduce vehicle congestion and improve the aesthetic quality of the area. Discussions regarding the removal of the gas station at Crane Flat 39 miles west in a perhaps even more highly sensitive resource area (Gray Owls etc.) would prove very problematic if both fueling sights were eliminated. Alternatives for when and how to resolve the fuel issues at Tuolumne Meadows and Crane Flat should be a major part of the Tuolumne Meadows planning process. Would a public information sign on eastbound 120 near Harden Flat (last gas until Lee Vining 75 miles) be adequate? Would a similar sign on Highway 140 at El Portal caution motorist's to fuel up before entering park? It's a good question. Hopefully we can find an answer.

Non-essential employee housing units should be relocated to the greatest extent possible to out of park venues near Lee Vining. Daily shuttle service could be established from Lee Vining that would provide transportation for relocated employees as well as for day use visitors when Tuolumne Meadows parking exceeds capacity.

The focus of this planning process will to be to insure that use patterns in both the wilderness corridor along the Tuolumne River, Poopenaut Valley and in the Tuolumne Meadows areas do not increase over present levels and that user capacity will be reduced if resource protection and visitor experience expectations cannot be met.

Thanks for listening. We will talk soon.

John and Chris Modin

El Dorado Hills, CA 95762



Kirstie Kari
09/06/2006 12:04 PM
PDT

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: TRP Comments

RECEIVED

TWSP-234-EIS
SEP 07 2006

P. 1081
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Visitor Center:

- Prefer no changes
- Any changes to exhibitry should retain the homespun feel of the wildflower exhibits and the hanging flags.
- Visitor Center should remain in the existing building and should not be made an epicenter like the store. It should be used to orient first time visitors
- Signage for center should be improved
- Perhaps a connector path from store?

Meadow and others

- The gentle paths that lead through Tuolumne Meadows are amazing for their lack of constructed materials (boardwalks, elevated walkways, bridges, etc...) It is one of the few places that a person can put feet into a meadow.
- Soda Springs bridge needs to be rehabilitated. It is falling apart.
- Campground is great. Do not change.
- Create more trailhead parking (Cathedral, etc...), but need to keep them hidden from view much like the campground.

General

- The size of the campground, parking availability, and lack of facilities does a great job of limiting the number of visitors.
- Tour buses should not be invited to stop in Tuolumne Meadows.
- Keep the Meadows as they are... no changes would be preferred. Maintain the existing structures, trails, facilities - do not modernize.

Kirstie Kari
Project Coordinator



K	I	E	E	SPR				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



Henry Shervem

09/06/2006 11:16 AM
MST

To: YOSE_Planning@NPS.GOV
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Meadows planning

RECEIVED

TWSP-235-EIS
SEP 07 2006

P. J. O'J
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

YOSE_Planning@NPS.GOV

September 6, 2006

Dear Sir:

I would like to add my comments to the Tuolumne Meadows planning process.

- 1) No new parking should be built.
- 2) No additional structures should be built.
- 3) Tent cabins and buildings should remain tent, and removed in winter.
- 4) Tram service from the Valley Floor should be added to relieve traffic.

Thank you

Henry Shervem

[Redacted signature]

5	1	2	2	7				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



"John Schooling"

09/06/2006 11:00 AM
MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne River and Meadows Plans

RECEIVED
TWSR-236-E/S
SEP 07 2006
P. 1081
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Superintendent:

I have visited these meadows for over fifty years. In my opinion, they offer a road accessible alternative to the valley that provides the visitor with a quite different experience. I would encourage you to keep it that way so that you do not have two Yosemite valley type experiences at the destinations of your two main roads.

To do this, you must build no new facilities. Either keep the campgrounds and lodging as they are, or eliminate the lodging, keeping the campgrounds. The only improvements would be designated walkways/trails across the meadows to allow them to be restored as you have done in the valley. Your trail system around the meadows is otherwise quite good and only needs to be maintained in good condition, but otherwise, as is.

Thank you for allowing input.

Sincerely,

John Schooling

I	1	2	3	T				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



"Eileen Duffy"

09/06/2006 01:56 PM

AST

Please respond to eileen

To: <YOSE_Planning@nps.gov>

cc:

Subject: Comment for Tuolumne Meadows Plan

RECEIVED

TWSR-237-EIS

SEP 07 2006

P-182

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Sir or Madame:

I have been spending ten days of late July or early August at the Tuolumne Meadows Campground for the last five years. Usually my family and I are part of a larger group of "mature" rock climbers. I myself began rock climbing in Tuolumne at age 50. Our group normally has half dozen campsites and many of the group have been coming to the Meadows for thirty years. Tuolumne Meadows offers great climbing opportunities for climbers of all abilities. Of paramount concern to me is that the new plan not curtail climbing options and that, in fact, it should expand them.

The Tuolumne Meadows plan needs to consider access and egress to climbing and hiking areas. The current parking and traffic situation could be improved by paying some attention to the climbing and hiking guides that are sold at the Tuolumne Store! Easier and more popular climbs and hikes need some adequate designated parking near their starts. Further, vehicular traffic on the main road could be abated if the shuttle stopped and picked up climbers and hikers at the trail heads of these areas. There are too few shuttle stops and many of them are within places where it is easy to park - they are needed at more of the trail heads with inadequate parking.

The National Park Service must have good records of occupancy at the Tuolumne Meadows Campground. I am certain those statistics would support my thought that more sites are needed to serve the number of visitors that would like to use them. This August one or two of our group was in line every morning and frequently back every afternoon to try to garner one of those elusive spots, mostly without success. There is a rumor that A Loop will be closed as part of the Tuolumne Meadows Plan. I hope that the sites there will be replaced and expanded.

Within the campground I feel that maintenance in general is lacking and that maintenance of the bathrooms is abysmal (maintenance, not cleaning)! My first four years in A loop the same window in the ladies room was broken. This year the C loop ladies room toilets both had broken seals so that the floor was wet within an hour of being cleaned and awash by morning.

Trash management at the campground has continued to worsen in the last five years. Americans have become accustomed to recycling and those who love the land, as most campers do, are assiduously trying to participate in the campground recycling program. I found again this year that the size / number of recycling bins was woefully

1	1	2	2	R				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TWSR-237-815
P. 282

inadequate to accommodate this participation. Further, on both Sundays of our stay, the day most campers depart and therefore the day with the most trash accumulation, there was no trash pickup at all. Signs at the recycling area indicate that there is no recycling available for gas canisters for camp stoves - this should be rectified.

My last comment for improving the campground would be to increase the size of the bear boxes. When you consider that many campsites are being shared by friends and therefore easily six adults could be sharing a bear box - they are too small. I would suggest boxes the size of those found at the Ellery Lake Campground would be much better. All the campers I have met have been following the rules and guidelines for bear box use.

The shining stars of the Tuolumne Meadows Campground are the National Park Personnel working there. During all of my five stays I have been impressed with the attitude, performance and competence of all - from Ranger to Kiosk Attendant.

Very truly yours,

Eileen Duffy



09/06/2006 05:34 PM
GMT

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
CC:
Subject: Tuolumne comments

RECEIVED

TWSR-238-EIS
SEP 07 2006

P. 181

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Hi

We were in Tuolumne in early August and are so pleased to see the removal of sapplings that would eventually obliterate the view of the meadows.

Question/Suggestion: Didn't there used to be a parking area for the Cathedral Lakes Trailhead back in the woods, off the road? We have always felt that parking along the road there has an unpleasant visual impact.

Thank you for your attention.

↓	1	2	2	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



"Dick Zscheile"

09/06/2006 10:32 AM
MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED
TWSR-239-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 1081
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

From: Richard Zscheile

Date: September 6, 2006

COMMENTS:

Leave the Tuolumne Meadows area basically as it is .

Visitors to Tuolumne Meadows should gladly tolerate its primitive facilities in order to enjoy the area 's features. This is similar to backpackers tolerating the extra effort to reach beautiful areas, etc .

Eliminate horses on all trails except for rangers' use. Continue existing mule trains to supply the High Sierra Camps. Heavy animals are hard on trails, which really belong to hikers (not bikers, motorcyclers or horsemen).

Maintain existing campgrounds better. Its restrooms have been a national disgrace in recent times due to very poor maintenance. Further renovate the old, original restrooms. Install skylights, shelves, and hooks. Remove graffiti sooner. Repair potholes in campground roads .

The stores, snack bar, gas station : leave basically as they are .

High Sierra Camps/Lodges: leave them rustic. No changes to facilities .

Primitive, rustic facilities separate the true nature lovers from the city slickers, the men from the boys . The "old road" on both sides of Tuolumne Meadows helped in this regard, although impractical for the increased traffic.

These thoughts are from one who has visited/hiked Tuolumne Meadows nearly every year since 1948 - 58 years.

Thank you.

↓	1	22	↑					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



Ruth Fiala

09/06/2006 08:30 AM
MST

To: Yose_Planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED

TWSR-240-815

SEP 07 2006

P. 181
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Tuolumne Meadows is a very special place. It is important to keep it as close to nature as possible. I would like to see no increased development in the area. I think the campground should limit or exclude motor homes and trailers, or limit them to a small area. The bathrooms shouldn't be upgraded, just maintained. The area has a great wilderness feel, even though there is existing development. I hope that it will remain so in the future.

Thank you,

Ruth Fiala

Santa Monica, CA 90405

J	1	2	2	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Comment Form TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN and TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

RECEIVED
TWSR-24-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 181
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written ideas, concerns, or suggestions during the public scoping period, which closes **September 7 2006**. Written comments may be mailed to: **Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Tuolumne Planning)**. Written comments may also be faxed to: **209/379-1294**. Electronic comments may be emailed to: **Yose_Planning@nps.gov** (in the subject line type: **Tuolumne Planning**). Comments can also be submitted online by going to **parkplanning.nps.gov/yose**. Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at **www.nps.gov/yose/planning/trp**.

Note: Anonymous comments will not be considered. Generally, The National Park Service will make available to the public for inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses.

Name: Deanne L. Dawson
Comment: _____

I	I	C	V	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	C	

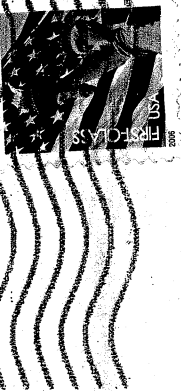
Address: _____, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Comments

I have been hiking Tuolumne Meadows, taking walks with kangas since the 1950's. Dr. Sharsmith's observations on life's cycles, the natural processes, are why Yosemite was established as a national park. The law states preserve for future generations means the natural processes, of which Dr. Sharsmith was speaking. Let these guide the "plan" and the river!

Sincerely,
Deanne Dawson

 Dianne Dawson
Pleasant Hill CA 94523-2759



OAKLAND CA 946

05 SEP 2006 PM 1 T

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577,
Yosemite, CA 95389



Att: Tuolumne Planning



Jim Moehl

09/07/2006 08:07 AM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Meadows plan

RECEIVED
TWSR-242-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 1031
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear NPS,

The purpose of this message is to comment on the Tuolumne River Plan and the Tuolumne Meadows Plan. I am greatly in favor of drastically reducing all commercial operations in and adjacent to Tuolumne meadows. I have been visiting this area for over thirty years and have observed major degradation to the trails, meadows and river banks. The overall usage of this area has exponentially increased and the resulting impacts are very disturbing. I believe that by limiting commercial activities (pack trains and high camps), the damage to Tuolumne meadows will be slowed, the environmental impacts will be reduced and Tuolumne Meadows might endure so my children can enjoy it.

Sincerely,
James Moehl

Bend, Oregon 97701

1	1	2	2	2				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Comment Form TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN and TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

RECEIVED
TWSR-243-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 1082
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written ideas, concerns, or suggestions during the public scoping period, which closes September 7, 2006. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Tuolumne Planning). Written comments may also be faxed to: 209/379-1294. Electronic comments may be emailed to: Yose_Planning@nps.gov (in the subject line type: Tuolumne Planning). Comments can also be submitted online by going to parkplanning.nps.gov/yose. Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at www.nps.gov/yose/planning/trp.

Note: Anonymous comments will not be considered. Generally, The National Park Service will make available to the public for inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses. Individuals' addresses will be withheld from publication of comments, however names may be made available.

Name: Jay Samner

Date of Comment: 9/3/06

Address: [REDACTED] Yosemite CA 95389

Comments

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS	

The aging sewer system is a serious concern that must be addressed. It should be upgraded but only to the minimum tool needed. That figure or decision will be difficult to determine. In of which I have to put complete trust in the "number crunchers. But what I do ask is to have the minimum tool for the new sewer system. This goes along with less development, which is a common theme I would like to stress.

Some ideas to keep the sewer system development down to a minimum would be to instal or better yet

(continue comments on back of page)

replace with composting toilets. These type of toilets have proven themselves in the backcountry thru the years so there is no reason they cant work in the front country. Some people get the idea of a foul smell and lack of hygiene with composting toilets, but that is only a rumor. These types of toilets can be washed and kept as scent free as flush toilets. By not having all of that flushing water we will decrease the need for such a large sewer system, and hence help with the minimum tool needed for development.

This idea of composting waste promotes a leave no trace lifestyle, and Tulumne is a great place to do this. We need visitors to see the government doing this so they want to do it themselves. We need to set an example of a large scale.

Tulumne is a great place to promote this due to its rustic feeling, primitive nature, and remote setting. In all reality we could change this, but we shouldn't, its one of the best features of Tulumne.

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Comment Form TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN and TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

RECEIVED
TWSR-244-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 182
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written ideas, concerns, or suggestions during the public scoping period, which closes September 7, 2006. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Tuolumne Planning). Written comments may also be faxed to: 209/379-1294. Electronic comments may be emailed to: Yose_Planning@nps.gov (in the subject line type: Tuolumne Planning). Comments can also be submitted online by going to parkplanning.nps.gov/yose. Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at www.nps.gov/yose/planning/trp.

Note: Anonymous comments will not be considered. Generally, The National Park Service will make available to the public for inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses. Individuals' addresses will be withheld from publication of comments, however names may be made available.

Name: Jay Samner Date of Comment: 9/2/06
Address: [REDACTED] Yosemite CA 95389

Comments

I	I	C	I	A				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	

The idea of developing is a bad idea. Maintaining areas or buildings is important, but large scale construction is bad. If we do need more housing sneak it in here or there. But there is talk of some kind of dorm, and that is totally absurd. Tents are really the only acceptable form of building. The reason for this is that Tuolumne is a seasonal place, and so are tents. The housing fits the place. Without that link Tuolumne would be out of place. This is of course in addition to its rustic feel. These things are nessarry in order for Tuolumne to remain in

(continue comments on back of page)

its true primitive feeling.

I understand that B and G feels the "put up" and take "down time" is an issue. My solution to this is teach people who live here how to build and dismanle their own cabins. This also will give people more pride in where they live. I know it will be more difficult, but the effort will be worth it.

I also understand that some people want "better" housing. Carpeting, electric heat, hard tops, and winterized housing. Well that would mean development, and that is bad. People say they need these improved conditions for family, or to raise a family. But people have been bringing up families in Tuolumne for decades with absolutely no problem, it even sounds interesting. It new people who just moved in need these fancy things they should live in El Portal, and keep Tuolumne Rustic.

Tuolumne is truly the last Rustic or Primitive place left in Yosemite's front country. These talks of development could end that all, ending one of the finest legacies left in the United States National Park Service. Its easy to say lets build to fix a problem we have today, but generations from now we will not be able to retrace our steps. The challenge will be to use what we have to fix our problems of today. So as we can see development effects not only the tangible, but also the feeling and pride of the future.

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: Christine S.
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: San Francisco, CA 94114
 USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

RECEIVED
 TWSR-245-ELS
 SEP 07 2006
 P. 1072
 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Correspondence Information

Status: New **Park Correspondence Log:**
Date Sent: 09/06/2006 **Date Received:** 09/06/2006
Number of Signatures: 1 **Form Letter:** No
Contains Request(s): No **Type:** Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The Tuolumne Meadows area should maintain minimum facilities and services. Fortunately the road is closed from late fall through spring, and services operate for a short time period during the summer months after the campground opens. The road closure due to weather and snow conditions helps to preserve the fragile habitats of the subalpine and alpine areas.

Regarding the appropriateness of facilities and services, I have the following comments:

- 1) The gas station in Tuolumne Meadows should be removed. There is a gas station in Lee Vining and in Crane Flat. So, it is unnecessarily risky to have a facility that stores fuel and requires the transfer of fuel from tanker trucks in this fragile environment.
- 2) Campgrounds should be stocked with larger recycling bins and appropriate collection containers for recycling empty pressurized gas containers. All bins should be labeled with information materials that educate the public on how to recycle and separate recyclables and what happens to the products they consume. The park service has a captive audience in the campgrounds, and educational panels can go a long way to raising consciousness around environmental issues, especially because more awareness will also benefit efforts to prevent the habituation of black bears. Also, having dumpster capacities for trash (for landfilling) that are much greater than the capacities of recycling bins sends the wrong signals to the public. The majority of packaging can be recycled. Or with awareness, the public might consider packaging that is minimal and recyclable.
- 3) Cathedral Lakes Trailhead: For good reason, the Park Service has installed bear boxes and portable toilets. However, the installation appears haphazard, as if it they are temporary and will not be needed in the future. The Park Service should consider building a raised solar bathroom facility – or some similar structure capable of surviving the winter and having the least amount of impact on the area, physically and visually.

Regarding other issues related to wildlife, I have the following comments:

1) As noted by the Park Service, "Yosemite's population of mountain yellow-legged frogs has been declining at a rate of 10% per year for the last five years, resulting in the disappearance of 95% of original populations.... The decline began with the stocking of non-native trout in Sierra lakes that began with the arrival of Euro-Americans over 100 years ago, and continued until 1990...The introduced fish voraciously consumed frogs and tadpoles, and numerous species of large invertebrates...The presence of non-native fish has reduced the ability of the frog populations to withstand the disease." I support all efforts to protect the mountain yellow-legged frogs and increase their populations to healthy levels.

1	1	PZW	X						
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS	

TS	OR	IR	IA	UT	DT	LT	S#	RT	

2) Bears: Efforts to reduce the habituation of black bears seem to be working in the Meadows area based on comments made by campground rangers and volunteers. However, in the campground there could be better signage and educational panels to describe the issues to visitors and how important it is to protect the bears (and other wildlife). Many visitors arrive after the campground kiosk closes, so they do not receive the mini-lecture.



Wilderness Watch

09/07/2006 11:43 AM
CST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED
TWSR-246-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 1081
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I am commenting on the Tuolumne River Plan and Tuolumne Meadows Plan.

- 1) The NPS should strive to reduce commercial exploitation of the Tuolumne Meadows area and the Tuolumne River corridor.
- 2) The "High Sierra Camps" at Tuolumne Meadows, Glen Aulin, and Vogelsang should be removed, the sites restored, and the Glen Aulin and Vogelsang sites should be designated as wilderness, as provided by the California Wilderness Act of 1984.
- 3) The NPS should reduce use of the Tuolumne Meadows/River areas by commercial packstock enterprises, and the NPS should adopt controls to reduce the impacts of these enterprises (i.e., require smaller group sizes for parties with stock, prohibit all grazing, designate campsites for parties with stock, remove all stock-holding facilities (i.e., corrals) from park lands, require diapers on horses to reduce water/trail pollution, etc.).

Jeff Smith

Missoula, MT 59807

T	1	2	2	X			
#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	



Jen Nersesian

09/07/2006 09:55 AM
PDT

To: Christine Geis/YOSE/NPS@NPS, Elexis Mayer/YOSE/NPS@NPS
cc:
Subject: Fw: Tuolumne River Plans

I had gotten this note from Norwood the kayaker after our SF meeting. He sent me a fax of book excerpts on kayaking the grand canyon of the tuolumne, which I shared with several folks and now have lost track of... I don't know if he intended them as official public comments, but just to make sure, I'm going to ask him to send them again. If he doesn't get the message in time and they come in late, and he wants them in the public record (he may not), please count them as official scoping comments since he originally sent them a long time ago.

Thanks...

---Jen

Jennifer T. Nersesian
Management Assistant to the Superintendent
Branch Chief, Public Involvement & Outreach
Yosemite National Park
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

209-372-0249---phone
209-372-0220---fax

----- Forwarded by Jen Nersesian/YOSE/NPS on 09/07/2006 09:32 AM -----



Norwood Scott

07/25/2006 03:25 PM
MST

To: jen_nersesian@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne River Plans

Hi Jennifer,

I met you at Fort Mason and we discussed whitewater kayaking, flows, watersheds, and access issues. I just wanted to thank you for developing a very professional and easy to understand presentation on the plan process, and for making the comment process easier with flip charts, rather than the traditional microphone.

I told you I would fax a copy of the Hobec/Stanley description of the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne for your records. It is on my list but I haven't had a chance yet. Actually, I've been paddling on Cherry Creek for the last seven days before flows drop to the normal summer release. I was also hoping to get into Upper Cherry above Cherry Lake but the thunderstorms derailed that plan.

In the meantime I thought you might find this online description of the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne interesting. It tends to be a self-regulating section of river.

[REDACTED]

RECEIVED
TWSR-247-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 1006
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I	1	2	4	5				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TWSR-247-EIS
P. 2 of 4

Thanks again, Norwood

TWSR-247-215
P-320

"Hi Daniel,

Here's my part of the Grand Canyon, Toby is giving the paddlers view. we are having problems getting my photos to take on this computer, john the wizard is sorting. ps can you do my spell check!

Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, the last of the great high sierras, it was always dubious if we were going to be able to obtain this one, water shortage and the scary usa government seemed to be against us. But whilst driving out of the Kings Canyon, jacked from the trip of a life time, plans for the final descent of the illegal last river were set in place, maybe a little in denial that our dreamful kayak trip could be coming to an end.

So there we were, only three left from the team plus our friend, sifting around the Yosemite national park madness, we were weekend visitors trying to blend in. Scoping out the scene, Monday was our put on day, the day we were too bet the Man. Because of Homeland Security threats, excessive ranger activity and my fragile visa existence in America I opted to be trail support. An innocent Kiwi girl taking a walk down the river, radio in hand to warn the boys of possible threats, rather gripping experience for the boys I think. I enjoyed the different pace, waltzing along the track, light pack, but must admit, water passage is a much more efficient and exciting form of transport.

I will let Toby tell the story from the on-water rats.

Hope that's ok we are hitting the road so a quick jobby."

posted by Tdub @ 6:38 PM

[8 comments](#)

SUNDAY, JULY 18, 2004

Grand Canyon of the T paddler report

Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, from the water.

Four AM wake up, five AM put on. It was rough, but as the guidebook says, useful for "avoiding conflict" with the rangers. It worked pretty well until John discovered that his helmet was still in the van. During the run to get his helmet, John, um "soiled" his pants. Now we have one more thing to give John (AKA Isheet MeDrawers) a hard time about.

TWSR-247-215
P. 426

Once on the river, it was mad bombing to the top of the portage above Glen Aulin. The rapids were pretty runnable, but the water was very low. We were very excited to get past Glen Aulin without seeing anyone else. The best rapid of the river is right below G. A., a big slide with a couple of moves on the way down. It is the slide where one of the Knapps does an aerial 360 spin in the old liquidlifestyles video.

TWSR-247-815
P.506

Below that slide it was flat meadows, interspersed with mostly unrunnable huge waterfalls all the way down to the top of Waterwheel Falls. I think that we may have run one rapid in this whole section.

Waterwheel Falls is enormous, not good to go at any level. We knew that we would have to portage it just from looking at the postcards at the gift shop in Tuolumne Meadows. So on to the shoulder went the boats. And there they stayed for the next hour as we switch backed down the hill. Below Waterwheel it seemed that all of the cool bedrock that we had expected was covered by enormous rock piles. We would bang through one section of manky rocks only to discover that the river disappeared into sieves in the next rapid. Back on the shoulder went the boats. Every now and again we would get back into the river when it flattened out and the sieves became less heinous. Even then it was a butt bruising experience. This was pretty much the routine all the way down to the top of the Muir Gorge. I think that we ended up being able to run two or three good rapids in this section.

Once at the top of the Muir Gorge we got on the radio with Nikki, she reported very difficult hiking around it. We had been told by Scott that it was all good, just when you get to the unscoutable one, run it five feet off the left wall. It was supposed to be an easy plop into the pool below. We found nothing that was good to go five feet off the left and nothing that plopped into a pool. All that was in there was one sketchy rock pile after another. Luckily we were able to scout everything and portage a lot. The last portage was the scariest. It involved a marginal jump onto a rock in the middle, then a traverse down the sharp spine on another rock to yet a third rock. In order to get from the second to the third rock we had to lower ourselves as far as we could hang and then drop down to the slick, wet rock from which we could seal launch. Passing the loaded kayaks from man to man through these moves was no picnic to say the least.

Below the Muir gorge it back into the rock piles and the portaging. We camped for the night at the first flat spot that we could find; exhausted and very glad to have survived the Muir gorge.

Day Two there were two more cool slides and a lot of rock piles and portages down to Pate valley. Below Pate Valley it gorged up again and many manky rock pile rapids and sieve portages brought us to the lake.

All in all we ran seven good rapids, hiked about as many miles with our boats and all swore that we would never go back. The consensus was that the guidebook is right, a backpack is the best way to see the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.



Mike Milne

09/07/2006 11:18 AM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Meadows Planning scoping comments

RECEIVED

TWSR-248-E15

SEP 07 2006

P. 183

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Twain Harte, CA 95383

September 7, 2006

Superintendent Michael Tollefson/ Park Planning
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Tuolumne Planning
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Re: Tuolumne Meadows Plan Scoping Comments

Dear Superintendent Tollefson and Park Planners,

CSERC appreciated the opportunity to meet with park planning staff on August 29th during the Tuolumne Meadows public scoping field tour. Our Center urges the Park to focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment and the scenic experience of this treasured area throughout the process of devising the 20-30 year Tuolumne Meadows Plan. Tuolumne Meadows should be managed to provide Park visitors an opportunity to experience this iconic Sierra Nevada landscape in a rustic, natural setting rather than having the resort-campground facilities dominate their experience.

Our Center encourages the Park to give a higher priority to the scenic and ecological resources of Tuolumne Meadows wherever these values conflict with either existing facilities or future management alternatives.

Sewage Treatment Facilities

- The Park needs to immediately begin work on a tertiary treated sewage facility. The upgraded, expanded facility should be able to meet projected future demand 30 years into the future. We suggest that the capacity level be designed to handle at least a 25% increase above current maximum levels in order to ensure adequate capacity for uncertain future use.

Move the Sewage Holding Ponds and Sprayfields

- Tuolumne Meadows is not an appropriate location for sewage holding ponds and sprayfields. These should be moved out of the meadow, perhaps to a location west of the Cathedral Lakes Trailhead on the south side of the road behind a screen of existing trees and, if necessary, with additional planted screening vegetation.

P	2	E	E	DR				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

Cathedral Lakes Trailhead

- A parking lot with spaces for at least 30-50 vehicles should be created to serve this popular trailhead and to minimize the need for hikers to park on the shoulder along Highway 120. We suggest creating a parking lot in the forest on the south side of the highway close to the existing trailhead where it could be screened from the road.

Eliminate Roadside Parking East of Visitor Center

- The roadside parking along the meadow east of the Visitor Center creates public safety concerns, has negative visual impacts, and promotes unmanaged recreation in Tuolumne Meadows that encourages trampling and other impacts. CSERC asks that the Park eliminate roadside parking in this area by placing natural roadside barricades next to the road to prevent use of the pullouts. If the Park needs additional parking spaces to accommodate use at Tuolumne Meadows, we suggest creating additional parking nodes on the south side of the highway to concentrate use in screened nooks where they will have a minimal visual impact on visitors.

Organize Tuolumne Meadows Recreation

- Unmanaged recreation in Tuolumne Meadows appears to have reduced some of the biological values of the main meadow complex. CSERC asks that the Park consider ways to limit uncontrolled access and unmanaged recreation in the meadow. In particular, impacts due to meadow trampling need to be addressed through analysis of the feasibility of creating more defined paths, better signage as folks enter the meadow, or other protective measures.

Continue Small Conifer Removal

- CSERC was encouraged to see an active conifer removal program in Tuolumne Meadows. We support these efforts, but ask that some small conifers that provide screening from Hwy 120 be retained, especially in areas where facilities are visible to motorists.

Further Efforts to Reduce the Incidence of Road kill

- Road kill is a serious problem, not just for bears, but for many other species as well. CSERC asks that the Park continue to study and implement methods to reduce future occurrences of road kill along the Tuolumne Meadows road segment.

Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center

- The Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center building needs to be either completely rebuilt in a lodge-type building that compliments surrounding structures (such as the potential permanent store/grill) or expanded in a manner that is consistent with the architectural style of the existing structure. The Visitor Center's limited educational and interpretative displays also need to be upgraded.

- The bathrooms near the Visitor Center bathrooms also need to be improved and remodeled incorporating a complementary rustic design that is consistent with the Center.

Tuolumne Meadows Grill/Store

- The seasonal store/grill facility that now exists does not provide the excellent user experience that visitors should associate with Yosemite National Park or the majestic beauty of Tuolumne Meadows. CSERC asks that the Park consider building a permanent lodge-type structure to house these services. We suggest pushing this permanent new facility back from the highway into a portion of the area now used for the campground, and that 8-10 spaces be removed to provide a buffer between the store facility and campers. Improved employee housing tied to the store could also be located in this area. The south portion of the existing parking lot could remain, but with a vegetative roadside buffer that would help reduce the visual impacts of the buildings and parking area for those driving past (see enclosed drawings).

Tuolumne Meadows Gas Station

- Our Center has no significant comments regarding the gas station, other than we believe that the Park should build appropriate employee housing to accommodate the gas station workers by placing a low visibility, low impact structure close to and behind the gas station. The tent cabins, bright flagging, and sloppy appearance of the current temporary housing is not attractive.

Tuolumne Meadows Campground Horse Camp Bathrooms

- The bathroom facilities in the horse camp loop need to be upgraded and redesigned to more closely match the stone and wood rustic look of the other Tuolumne Meadows campground bathrooms.

Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Center Parking

- The parking lot of the wilderness Center needs to be expanded since it appeared to be completely full during our weekday visit.

Gravel Road Leading to the Stables

- Parking along the gravel road needs to be concentrated into several parking areas and signs need to direct visitors to park in the new lots, rather than strung out for a quarter mile along the edge of the meadow.

Bathrooms at this Gravel Road

- The bathrooms at this popular pullout need to be significantly upgraded to not only handle the existing demand, but to make their use a pleasant experience.

Thank you,

John Buckley, Executive Director
Milne, Staff Biologist

Michael



"Peg O'Malley"



09/07/2006 01:58 PM
EST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Re: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED
TWSR - 249-215
SEP 07 2006
p. 1 of 1
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

1) Protect the meadows. Consider boardwalks?

2) I just returned from five days in Yosemite. It was my first visit, and I was glad to see that food, shops, etc. were confined to very specific locations. It seems to cut down on litter, too.

Thank you!

I	1	E	E	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



carl mears

09/07/2006 10:43 AM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning

RECEIVED
TWSR-250-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 181
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear National Park Service

I am commenting on the Tuolumne River Plan and Tuolumne Meadows Plan.

I would like to see the Park Service Reduce commercial exploitation of the Tuolumne area. This would include the removal of the High Sierra camps in the area (this includes Tuolumne, Glen Aulin, and Vogelsang), as well as a reduction of use of the area commercial packing companies. The large pack trains used by both these enterprises degrade the trails, overgraze meadow areas, and transport invasive weed species into the area. My understanding is that the removal of the High Sierra Camps was provided for in the California Wilderness Act of 1984, signed into law by President Reagan. Instead of the reduction in concentrated use mandated by this act, I understand that use by commercial packers has increased in this area.

I also think that the concentration of use caused by commercial packers and the High Sierra Camps is a significant cause of bear problems in the back country. I personally have experienced many more bear incidents near these areas than in the remote back country where use is more evenly spread.

Thanks for you attention to my concerns

Dr. Carl A. Mears

Cotati, CA, 94931

T	I	9	9	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS



John Buckley

09/07/2006 12:29 PM
MST



Tuo W&S scoping cmmts.doc

To: yose_Planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Wild and Scenic cmmts from CSERC

RECEIVED

TWSR-251-EIS

SEP 07 2006

P. 104

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

P	1	E	E	DRP				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TWSP-251-EIS
P. 284



Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

Box 396 • Twain Harte, CA 95383 • (209) 586-7440 • FAX (209) 586-4986

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Tuolumne Planning
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Mike and those of you who are on the planning staff:

Please accept the following brief scoping comments for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Plan. As I hope you have already seen, we have sent in comments for Tuolumne Meadows management in a separate scoping comment letter.

Primarily, our emphasis is on looking at the unique situation that confronts the Park. On one hand you have an extensive network of highly, highly popular organized, profitable camps that lie within the boundaries of the Wild and Scenic management zone for the river. You have a Tuolumne Meadows urbanized center with shopping, at least two restaurants, a post office, a gas station, a wide range of camping or lodging facilities, a pack station and stables, a visitor center, and the associated water, wastewater, electrical, and other systems tied to such an urbanized area.

On the other hand, you have what is literally two spectacular wilderness zones extending north and south of the Tioga Pass road that stretch for vast distances across the mountains, and within those spectacular wildlands lie mile after mile of river with outstandingly remarkable values.

The obvious goal of your process would appear to be to totally, totally protect and preserve the most pristine wild values of all the most rugged or remote wild areas affected by the plan, to give extremely high levels of resource protection and to provide consistent opportunities for solitude in the wild areas that receive moderate to high use, and to manage the scenic and recreation segments of the Tuolumne River in a manner that not only enhances those values in those segments, but which also either enhances or at least doesn't degrade the wild ecosystem values of the adjacent wild river segments.

Reality is likely to be in conflict with some of those goals because there will be social and political pressure to maintain at least the current level of use at the social group camps in the river system. There will also be pressure to keep Tuolumne Meadows as it is or to even expand its recreational lodging capacity, and there will certainly be those

who advocate for maximizing visitor use into the high country of Tuolumne Meadows to draw use away from the overly congested valley.

Given all the above, CSERC provides some initial comments in addition to comments we have already submitted verbally at various meetings.

- 1) We suggest that the Park at least consider a proposed action, preferred alternative that would scale back, relocate, or eliminate the Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp or any other commercial camp enterprises within any of the wild segments of the river corridor in locations further than 1 mile from the Tioga Pass road. While this would deprive some recreational visitors the accommodations and services that they have come to associate with various camps, the scaling back or eliminating of the camps would reduce the amount of use, increase the potential for solitude and a sense of wildness, and reduce the stress on the ecosystem.
- 2) While the Wild and Scenic management zone understandably does not take in the areas upslope from Hetch Hetchy reservoir, how day use and overnight backpacking is managed in that area directly affects wilderness values, wildlife, and other values upstream and downstream from those areas. That should be considered. We suggest that the Park include the recreational trail system extending into the Hetch Hetchy parking area, trailhead, etc. as part of the management consideration needed for managing the overall river corridor.
- 3) Looking at User Capacity, CSERC recommends that user capacity within all wild segments of the river corridor be managed primarily to minimize use about levels that are deemed satisfactory to at least 75% of wilderness visitors. Our staff personally prefers very low levels of contact with other visitors because we primarily seek solitude, wildlife sightings, and being intermeshed with the ecosystem. If, however, 75%+ of wilderness visitors in the Tuolumne River corridor (outside of the Tuolumne Meadows zone) are satisfied with seeing up to 75 or 100 other people a day, then the Park should at least consider that level in a proposed action.
- 4) Stock use is one of CSERC's highest concerns, especially as it affects the biological resources. Pack stock grazes while in the river corridor, which affects a wide range of plant and plant-dependent species. Pack stock manure likely introduces a host of introduced non-native plants. The manure along trails directly affects the user experience for the bulk of visitors who are not depositing manure periodically as they walk on the trail. We believe the Park should consider a reasonable range of alternatives which would include keeping use as it exists, removing the use entirely, or modifying pack stock use and operations to reduce conflicts and enhance the ORVs of the affected areas.
- 5) CSERC recommends that the trail system in the river corridor match the designation for the segment. If an area is wild, then the trail in that segment should have minimal visual impact, it should not make it easy to move through

the mountains, and it should primarily be a clear directional path to move wild-seeking purists through the wilderness. In areas that are designated scenic, the river corridor zone should have trails that are still minimally intrusive, but a higher level of visibility and aids for users might be incorporated into the trail design and maintenance. Then in the recreational segment(s), trails may appropriately be easily seen, wider and more accessible, and aimed less at hiding their presence. Make trails and maintenance of trails tied to river segment classification.

- 6) Rare wildlife species within the river corridor should be clearly identified; a best-available-science baseline description of their status should be provided; and the range of alternative actions should include at least one alternative that would reduce human impacts to the most at-risk species through various steps recommended by Park specialists.
- 7) Finally, CSERC is unclear how the Park intends to separate out project level implementation goals or actions from the management plan for the wild and scenic corridor. It would appear that some very specific project or policy decisions would need to be made as part of the broader plan if the broader plan is to have any clarity to the public.

Overall, our preference is to have the overwhelming bulk of the Tuolumne River corridor managed for biological, ecosystem values first. Then we accept the second priority focus for creating recreational enjoyment only that level of recreational use won't degrade the ecosystem values of the river... and then finally, commercial and gateway business interests should be considered. Unless the first two are sustainable, the value to the gateway communities won't last in the long term, anyway.



GLENDALE - LA CRESCENTA ADVOCATES

La Crescenta, CA 91214



August 27, 2006

Superintendent,
Tuolumne Planning
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RECEIVED

-TWSR-252-815

SEP 07 2006

P. 181

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Sir:

Unless you want to count the top of Mt. Whitney, there are very few areas left in this state that are pristine or even somewhat pristine! So, with respect to the Tuolumne River and the Tuolumne Meadows, I think every effort in your planning for these two areas should be made to keep them as pristine as possible.

That means no boating, no canoeing, no rafting, and no fishing on at least the majority of the Tuolumne River and removing the stores, grill and gas station from the Tuolumne Meadows and disallowing camping and cooking in the meadows area itself. Otherwise, the area will be trashed with paper, Styrofoam cups, plates and whatever, empty cans and bottles and probably dirty diapers!

I realize that we are being rather harsh. I further realize that what is stated above will not happen but if we are to keep any semblance of our present forests, meadows and rivers, people have to be kept away from at least large parts of those areas.

Anyway, you asked for my concerns and I and others here are deeply concerned about the environmental condition now and in the future of our public lands. Thank you for doing the best you can to protect those lands.

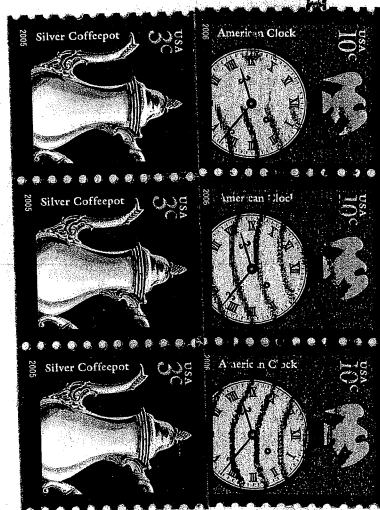
Sincerely,

Dick Seeley

T	I	L	U	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

Mr. Richard Seeley
La Crescenta, CA 91214-1026

SANTA CLARA
CA 913
28 AUG 2006



Superintendent,
ATTN: Tuolumne Planning
P.O.Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

35323+0577 B004



Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Comment Form TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN and TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

RECEIVED
TWSR-253-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P.1084
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written ideas, concerns, or suggestions during the public scoping period, which closes **September 7, 2006**. Written comments may be mailed to: **Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Tuolumne Planning)**. Written comments may also be faxed to: **209/379-1294**. Electronic comments may be emailed to: **Yose_Planning@nps.gov** (in the subject line type: **Tuolumne Planning**). Comments can also be submitted online by going to **parkplanning.nps.gov/yose**. Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at **www.nps.gov/yose/planning/trp**.

Note: Anonymous comments will not be considered. Generally, The National Park Service will make available to the public for inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses.

Name: Kari Cobb
Comment: Tuolumne - An employee perspective Date of 8/28/06

Address: [REDACTED] Redding CA 96003

Comments

Typed Comment Attached

2	1	C	T	A					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	T	

I have worked in Tuolumne Meadows for the past two summers, and have spent my last three summers in this area. I have come to appreciate this area more than anywhere I have been or lived in the past. I love walking out my cabin door and looking into acres and acres of trees. I love walking a short two minutes to enjoy the sound of the river. I love the mild hike to the top of Puppy Dome where I can see the entire meadows glow pink while the sun sets for the day. I love knowing for the three or four months I live here, I will enjoy this same type of atmosphere everyday I step out my front door. Upon reading the "Planning Tuolumne" guide book I began to imagine Tuolumne turning into the same type of atmosphere as Yosemite Valley. For this reason I strongly believe Tuolumne planning take into consideration the very special place on the verge of a threatening change. Tuolumne is a place like no other, and although many things are in desperate need of change, there are so many more things that are in desperate need of preservation.

On the note of the Tuolumne River, it is my understanding certain precautions are already in effect to preserve this beautiful river. Under my knowledge I know of no manmade structures that are placed close to a certain area of the river. Rules and regulations of the park service allow no flotation devices or domestic animals to utilize in the river. When visitors gain a wilderness permit, the Wilderness Center clearly states its regulations with watersheds and backcountry camping. I feel the majority of the Tuolumne River has been, and is still, under great care and consideration and is living an exceptionally free lifestyle. There arises one small concern when I reflect on the Tuolumne River, and that is the sewage pond, very close in proximity to the river, located in the Tuolumne Meadows. I do not know much information on this subject, but it still amounts to some concern. If the goal of this plan is to keep the river healthy and flowing, it seems to me this sewage pond would impede the progress of that goal.

Turning to the second part of the Tuolumne Meadows planning, I am extremely concerned with this part of the process. Under "What is User Capacity?" the planning asks what type of facilities are needed for this area. In planning what facilities to keep and which ones to get rid of, I urge that the one thing be kept in mind: many of the visitors to Tuolumne Meadows are here to begin backcountry stays. Many of the visitors utilizing facilities in this area are doing so for a short period of time in order to prepare for their journey into the wilderness. Those that are not utilizing the backcountry overnight are certainly using it for day use. Unlike Yosemite Valley visitors that arrive in order to utilize the paved paths spanning miles along hiking trails short distances away from the road, Tuolumne visitors come here to get away from paved paths and other visitors. They come here to lavish in a simple lifestyle that is hard to find in other locations.

"What is User Capacity?" also asks what type of experience should this area provide. Tuolumne is known as the backcountry. It is known for its harsh weather, cold temperatures, and rustic way of life. This is exactly what Tuolumne Meadows should continue to offer. This is exactly why people visit this area. These are the type of people that respect wilderness and love this place more than any other place in the world.

I understand there is concern about visitor use of this area and the type of damage that is being done to the wilderness area. At the same time, there is also consideration of adding more visitor facilities. The addition of facilities means more visitors, especially those types of visitors that do not respect the wilderness and the rustic way of life. If

there is such concern about visitor facilities, why not improve the ones that are already in place in Tuolumne? The Tuolumne Meadows Campground currently has roughly 278 sites available to visitor stay. With each site housing a maximum of six people, that is equivalent to 1668 people; this number does not include lodging offered by the DNC or the number of day visitors. By adding more visitor facilities, there would be need to offer more visitor lodging, which in turn goes against the parks preservation part in the planning process. More lodging means more destruction to wilderness and more use of the river and meadow.

Although I disagree with the addition of more facilities for visitors, I agree with upgrading the facilities already in place. An important facility that I feel needs much attention is the Tuolumne Store. Recently at work I listened to a visitor discuss with me the dismay he felt that he couldn't find an apple in the Tuolumne store. That same day, I listened to an older gentleman discuss with me how the Tuolumne store used to carry everything you needed, now when he shops in the store, he is lucky to find one thing on his list. Even in the few short years I have lived in Tuolumne, I have noticed a dramatic decrease in food quality and quantity. In order to stock my refrigerator on a weekly basis, I must drive an hour one way to Mammoth in order to have a selection bigger than two food products.

A second facility, which is not a conventional facility but is extremely important, is trash and recycling removal. I know in the past there has been much discussion about improving this facility, but not a thing has been done to improve it. Many days in the campground I stare at recyclables piled on the ground because the cans are too small to accommodate the amount of bottles and jars. Many days I have driven through the campground to pick up those bottles and jars in order to comply with food storage policy, but as I drive away with empty bottles and jars, the pile appears on the ground again. When walking through the campground talking to visitors to encourage proper food storage, I have been confronted with the trash and recycling problem: If the National Park Service can't store food items properly, why should they? Their point is valid. So how much do we care about our bears?

The last facility I want to talk about is employee housing. I love living in Tuolumne Meadows. I love being in the middle of this backcountry. I love my tent cabin. I even love when it gets down to 15 degrees at night and I wake up to find my water frozen by my bed. I understand there is talk about moving employee housing down to Lee Vining. I consider this one of the worst ideas the park service could consider for a number of reasons. First, the Tioga Pass closes multiple times throughout the summer for such things as rockslide, hail, snow, wind, and rain. If employees were housed down the grade, what happens when the road closes? Second, many employees do not have cars, how will they get to work? Those that do have cars can barely make it up the pass in what they have. There is also the danger factor, the Tioga Road along the pass is one of the most dangerous roads in this area, asking NPS employees to drive it everyday shows little concern for our safety. Another deterrent from choosing this option is the gas prices. The east side has one of the highest gas prices in all of California, many of us don't make enough to spend 4.00 per gallon to drive up and down the pass.

There are also multiple benefits to having NPS employees directly in Tuolumne. One of those benefits is search and rescue operations. My boyfriend currently works for Tioga Pass Entrance Station and there has been multiple times this summer a law

enforcement officer has knocked on our door asking if he would help with the rescue because SAR personnel is low in numbers. Rousting someone from Lee Vining to help with SAR's is impractical just considering the time it takes to make it to the meadows. Living in Tuolumne also allows for a sense of community and friendship that might otherwise be lost among different branches of NPS employees. It is rare that I get to spend time with the rangers in the Wilderness Center, but living next door to a few I have formed friendships with all of them.

Living in Tuolumne, and keeping it just the way it is, is essential to the spirit that currently breezes through the trees in the forest and the grasses in the meadow. I love this place just the way it is, and the way it is, is what keeps me coming back year after year.

RECEIVED

TWSR-254-E15

SEP 07 2006

P. 182

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

FAX TRANSMISSION**TO:** Superintendent, Yosemite National Park. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389.**FAX #** (209) 379-1294**FROM:** Pamela Reid. [REDACTED], Whittier, CA 90602**DATE:** September 2, 2006**NO. OF Pages:** 2**PUBLIC COMMENT FORM:****TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN AND TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN**

My biggest concerns regarding our National Parks in general, and Tuolumne in particular, are: (1) that they are being increasingly defiled to satisfy the money-making schemes of wealthy corporations; and, (2) that attempts are still being made to make the parks "easily accessible" to tourists who want to "experience" the parks without moving under their own power, and who are unwilling to sacrifice the least of the "comforts of home" during their visit.

There have to be some protected places in this country that are allowed to exist without producing profits for a select group, and which do not cater to tourists who want every vacation experience made convenient and free of exertion. Yosemite Valley now resembles Disneyland more than anything else. It is essential that the contagion of consumerism and commercialism be kept out of Tuolumne.

First and foremost, the practice of hauling tourists on mules needs to stop immediately, as does the practice of having mules haul supplies to the camps for people who are too lazy to carry their own gear. It is not appropriate for National Park hiking trails to be coated with mule excrement and urine. Hikers who are trying to travel lightly on the Earth have to slog through mule-urine mud, eat and breathe mule-excrement dust, and encounter noisy yahoos in cowboy hats leading mule trains. One of them actually addressed me with a "Howdy, Ma'am," tipping his cowboy hat as I was forced off the "hiking" trail to allow his

1

I	I	L	F	X				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TWSR-254-EIS
P. 0072

overloaded mule-slaves, depositing their piles of steaming dung and streams of urine, to pass. These are the trails that the Park Service makes off-limits to thirty pound pet dogs on leashes (and with good reason), but on which dozens of thousand pound mules are allowed to stomp and defecate regularly with Park Service blessing. (Of course, the camps and mule rides make profits for the Corporation, and pet dogs do not.) This is the 21st century. The cowboy mentality, which encouraged the pillage and exploitation of natural resources, does not belong in our National Parks. We are struggling to save the last shreds of wildness from exploitation. Send the "Corporation Cowboys" and their mules to Delaware, and leave Tuolumne for those who wish to see what the Earth looked like before human greed despoiled it.

The other improvement I would suggest would be to close the Tuolumne Lodge. Camping creates less of an impact while giving people a chance to see the park up close. A few Park Service campgrounds and a camp store should be the only form of development in Tuolumne. (A camp store prevents car trips by visitors down the mountain for ice and supplies. Car trips create air pollution and danger to wildlife). Tuolumne should be kept free of all commercial development or "services" provided by for-profit corporations. No lodges, no restaurants, no mules.

Please save Tuolumne from the fate that has befallen the Valley. As John Muir observed, nothing "dollarable" is ever safe. The Park Service needs exert itself to protect Tuolumne from the severe exploitation that is being increasingly carried out in our National Parks.

RECEIVED
TWSR-255-E15
SEP 07 2006
P. 1 B1
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Tuolumne Meadows Plan

Hi,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Plan. I have hiked and backpacked in this area for years. I just returned after staying for the first time in the Tuolumne Meadows Campground. This is one area I would like to see vastly upgraded. That is one of the worst campgrounds I have ever stayed in. I'm all for roughing it, but for a National Park, the facilities are atrocious. No privacy, no electricity in the restrooms.

I would like to see our National Park Campgrounds patterned after the Canadian National Parks. Each site is private with distinct areas for fires, eating. They even have firewood cut for you.

Also, I would like to see more activity at Tenaya Lake. It's a beautiful accessible lake that is not being used at all.

I realize any new improvements hinges on funding. If money is available I would be in favor of these improvements.

Sincerely,



Mike Kujacich

[REDACTED]
Livermore, CA 94550

T	I	L	U	H				
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

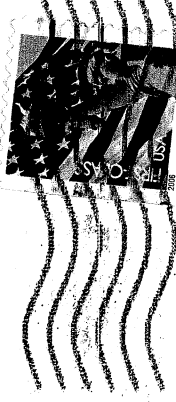
Kujovich

[REDACTED]

Livermore, CA 94550

OAKLAND CA 946

30 AUG 2006 PM 8 L



Superintendent
Yosemite Nat Park
Attn: Tudumne Planning
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, ~~California~~ 95432

2 South Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370
Phone: (209) 533-5511
Fax: (209) 533-5510

**Tuolumne County
Administrator's Office**

Fax

RECEIVED
TWSR-256-215
SEP 07 2006
P.1 B4
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Date: September 5, 2006

To: Superintendent, Tuolumne Planning

From: Steve Boyack, Senior Administrative Analyst
Office of the County Administrator
Email: [REDACTED]

Pages: 34

Fax #: 379.1294

I will be following up with a hard copy.

Thanks,

SB

CIL FGR

RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Tuolumne County
Administration Center
2 South Green Street
Sonora, California 95370

Phone (209) 533-5521
Fax (209) 533-6549



Alicia L. Jamar
Clerk of the Board
of Supervisors

Elizabeth Logan
Assistant Clerk

TWSR-256-EIS
p. 284

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE**

Elizabeth Bass, *First District*
Mark V. Thornton, *Fourth District*

Paolo Maffei, *Second District*

Vacant - *Third District*
Richard H. Pland, *Fifth District*

September 5, 2006

Michael J. Tollefson, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

Re: Tuolumne River Plan and Tuolumne Meadows Plan Comments

Dear Mr. Tollefson:

The County of Tuolumne submits the following comments under scoping for the Tuolumne River Plan and Tuolumne Meadows Plan. The County plans to be involved throughout the planning process.

The County has the following comments:

- The County believes that prior to initiating reviews of the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows area, the National Park Service (NPS) should carry out the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision to create a legally adequate Comprehensive Management Plan for the Merced River.
- If the NPS does not wish to enforce the court's decision on the Merced River Plan, the County believes that the NPS should review the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows with separate environmental documents. The County believes that operations at Tuolumne Meadows will have a direct impact on the Tuolumne River and should be reviewed separately. This would give the public additional opportunities to provide comments.
- The Tuolumne River was designated Wild and Scenic in 1984. Congress mandated that a comprehensive management plan must be developed within three years of the designation. The NPS is just now starting that process. It will be difficult in 2006 to determine what the baseline resource conditions were in 1984 at the time of designation. Those baseline conditions should be the starting point for evaluating "non-degradation."

Michael J. Tollefson, Superintendent
September 5, 2006
Page 2

- Impacts on the Tuolumne River as associated with Hetch Hetchy Reservoir should not be excluded from the plan. Suggestions have ranged from eliminating O'Shaughnessy Dam to raising it. Operational changes either way will have a significant impact upon the Tuolumne River.
- Tuolumne Meadows sewage disposal operations should be examined closely. Sewage releases to the Tuolumne River are not just an ecological issue but this is a drinking water supply. Sewer plant expansions, if undertaken, are growth inducement with associated impacts upon tourism supportive services.
- Operational changes to Tioga Pass Road, e.g. early season openings, should be addressed.
- The Park Service's plan for establishing shuttle bus service and staging at Tuolumne Meadows should be addressed (the County of Tuolumne is already on record concerning issues regarding mass transit tourism versus private vehicle access).
- The Park Service needs to address how its fire and smoke management strategies (landscape modifications) will coordinate and harmonize with the Tuolumne River Plan and Tuolumne Meadows Plan.
- The Tuolumne River Plan should take into account and complement the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project's (SNEP) findings.

The District Court recently ruled that the Park Service's Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) planning framework, which is the Park Service's primary user capacity program, "is not oriented toward preventing degradation" and is not valid under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Park officials have publicly stated that the Merced River Plan has provided the learning foundation for preparing the Tuolumne Plan. Park staff should be focused on finishing what was started in 1999, rather than being spread thin with the planning frenzy currently going on in the Park. The County believes a protective Merced River Plan must be first priority before Yosemite Valley is more severely impacted.

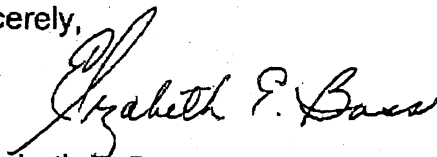
TWSR-256-EIS
P. 4 of 4

Michael J. Tollefson, Superintendent
September 5, 2006
Page 3

The County recommends that the National Park Service, during its review of scoping comments, consider the County's concerns during the subsequent drafting of the corresponding Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

If you have any questions, please contact Steve Boyack, Natural Resources Analyst at (209) 533-5511.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth E. Bass, Chair
Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Congressman George Radanovich
Assemblyman Dave Cogdill
Senator Charles Poochigian
Craig L. Pedro, Acting County Administrator
Gregory Oliver, County Counsel
Steve Boyack, Natural Resources Analyst ✓
Beverly Shane, Community Development Department Director

September 2, 2006

Superintendent,
ATTN: Tuolumne Planning, P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RECEIVED
TWSR-257-EIS
SEP 07 2006
P. 1 81
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Superintendent:

I have received a mailing from the National Park Service inviting me to participate in the planning for the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows area. I assume this invitation reflects the fact that I and my extended family have, for more than 20 years, spent time each summer at Tuolumne Meadows. In any event I do appreciate the opportunity to comment...although the invitation reached me too late for me to attend the August 29th on-site visit.

My comments are in two segments:

1. As regards the Tuolumne River Plan: It is my opinion that this Plan should not be undertaken until the Park Service has created a legally adequate Merced River Plan. You folks need to demonstrate to Judge Ishii and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that you can create an acceptable Comprehensive Management Plan for the Merced Wild and Scenic River...which task is some 16 years unfulfilled. Park staff should focus on finishing the Merced River Plan...a protective Plan that should be the first and principle priority if Yosemite Valley is to be protected. This would also mean that a Tuolumne River Plan will have an acceptable model so that it can be on target the first time it is put together and so avoid the years of litigation which has plagued the Merced River Plan..
2. As regards the Tuolumne Meadows Plan: This planning is near and dear to me for Tuolumne Meadows has been such a treasure for our family. I urge you to separate the Tuolumne River Plan from the Tuolumne Meadows Plan. Programmatically the River Plan will provide guidance with respect to zoning and the range of activities which may typically be found within the various zones in Tuolumne Meadows. The Tuolumne River Plan should be completed first so that the public will know what that 'guidance' is, in order to offer meaningful comments on the Tuolumne Meadow Plan. The Park should not force legally significant scoping and development of both plans simultaneously. There should be a Record of Decision for the Tuolumne River Plan before there is any scoping and plan development for Tuolumne Meadows.

Thank you again for including me in your mailing.

Sincerely,

Margaret Ann Watson

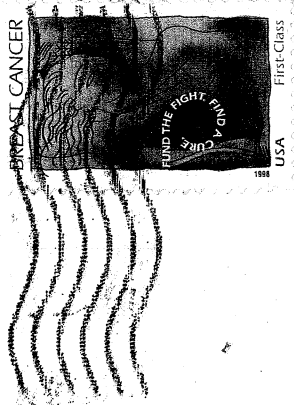
Margaret Ann Watson

St. Helena, CA 94574

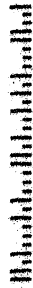
T	I	L	U	T					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS	

St. Helena, CA 94574

75 SEP 29 1963



Superintendent
ATTN: Two-volume Planning
Yosemite, CA 95389



September 1, 2006

Superintendent Michael J. Tollefson
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Tuolumne Planning
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RECEIVED
TWSR-258-215
SEP 07 2006
P. 102
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Superintendent Tollefson:

I am writing to comment on the Tuolumne Meadows Concept Plan EIS. (In regards to the Tuolumne River plan, I see no point in commenting since Hetch Hetchy cannot be included in the planning process.) I belong to no organization nor am I affiliated with any business that has dealings with the National Park Service; my opinions are entirely my own.

I have visited Tuolumne Meadows every year since 1978. I have backpacked and hiked out of every trailhead, spent many nights in the Tuolumne Meadows campground, and have hiked most of the Sierra backcountry from Whitney Meadows south of Sequoia National Park to north of Virginia Pass in Yosemite.

I will not comment on certain specific ecological issues that are beyond my layman's knowledge, such as invasive plants and resource monitoring. Along with those scientists who are studying such issues as amphibian habitat and the encroachment of pines on certain areas of the meadow (something I've noticed as well), I urge you to give special consideration to the analysis and opinions of the winter rangers. More than anyone, they possess a unique knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of this special place.

Tuolumne Meadows is a remarkably singular location, not simply because it is the Sierra's largest subalpine meadow. No other place combines the wide-open grandeur and intimate privacy of Tuolumne Meadows. One can see the far view of Mts. Dana and Gibbs and the Cathedral Range or sit in solitude in a small pine grove by the Tuolumne River. It is not a matter of what "activities" I engage in while there; simply being in Tuolumne Meadows in and of itself, and feeling myself an infinitesimal part of that larger whole is enough.

In planning for Tuolumne Meadows, one must accept that a highway runs through the meadow. While I and others may wish for the pristine place that existed prior to the building of the Tioga Road, that is no longer possible. However, certain facilities along the Tioga Road and within the Tuolumne Meadows area could be eliminated or relocated. Here are a few suggestions.

The parking area for the Cathedral Lakes trailhead should be moved from the current overcrowded and dangerous pull-off from the road. The current Visitor Center should be transformed into the backcountry permit and wilderness information office. The Visitor Center parking area could become an overnight lot for backpackers using the Cathedral Lakes trail. The current permit kiosk/wilderness office could then be eliminated.

The Tuolumne Meadows gas station, store, and post office should be consolidated to a single location. The grill should be closed; there is no need for what is essentially a fast-food outlet in Tuolumne Meadows.

T	L	U	T					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

Comments on Tuolumne Meadows Concept Plan EIS, page 2

I would like to see the road from north of the Lembert Dome picnic area to Soda Springs/Parsons Lodge closed. The area should be restored and the road transformed into a trail. Backpackers and day hikers could park at the two parking areas south of Tioga Road where the current permit kiosk is located and the John Muir Trail lot; if necessary, a new parking area should be considered in the same area by the employee housing and stables or even further east at Tuolumne Lodge.

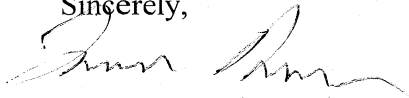
At least a portion of the campground should be open from as soon as possible after the Tioga Road is open in June through Columbus Day weekend. For many years, that was the norm. It is my understanding that problems with the bathrooms and pipes freezing caused the current shorter season. If that's the case, those facilities should be upgraded. Also, at least half the campground should remain on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Regulating travel on the meadow itself is more problematic. Meandering across the meadow's vast expanse without regard for trails is one of the life's most profound experiences. I have spent many hours along the river and many evenings watching the sunset and alpenglow from viewpoints off-trail. However, I also understand that off-trail hiking damages the fragile meadow environment for many generations. My wish is that it may be possible to preserve both the sub-alpine meadow environment and these singular experiences. Perhaps, portions of the meadow could remain permanently closed, other portions closed for restoration for a certain number of years and then reopened, and other areas always remain accessible.

The hike from John Muir Trail parking lot, along the Dana Fork, across the bridge, and to the Lyell Fork crossing is one of the most unique short hikes in the Sierra. One experiences an encapsulation of the sub-alpine Sierra. I've been fortunate to walk this short section in solitude, no longer hearing the noise of the highway and encountering the scurrying crowds. I suggest that you and other park officials who are going to ultimately decide on the specifics of this plan, get of your offices and away from maps, budgets, and the written reports of biologists, and also experience this hike. Get to know the sunrise light on Unicorn and Cathedral peaks, the sound of the Lyell Fork as it quietly meanders through the meadow or rushes past the bridge, and the evening's alpenglow on Mts. Dana and Gibbs. Rediscover why Tuolumne Meadows is one of this planet's natural wonders and should forever remain as pristine as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurence Brauer

[REDACTED]
San Geronimo, CA 94963
[REDACTED]

Laurence Brauer
[REDACTED]
San Geronimo, CA 94963

SAN FRANCISCO CA 941

02 SEP 2006 PM 3 L



Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Tuolumne Planning
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

95389+0577

